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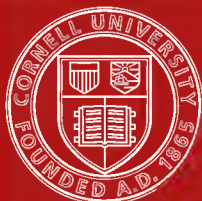
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CHRISTMAS IN NARRAGANSETT

BY

EDWARD EVERETT HALE

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CHRISTMAS IN NARRAGANSETT.

CHAPTER I.

COLONEL INGHAM sat on his horse where the rough road ascends from Perch Cove. He was himself superintending the erection of a telephone wire.

Quite a wondering crowd surrounded him. He had summoned one or two of the fishing gang to help—stout fellows, who had been aloft in a gale, and were not afraid to sway back and forward if the wind blew. Tom Grinnell, the singing gaberlunzie, who looks in upon all the people along the shore from Pint Judy Pint as far as the Gilmans, at Norwich Town, was looking on. A belated Italian, with his bear, working southward, could not resist the attraction. Oliver was there—half Indian, half negro, half white man, and general purveyor. He had a Chinaman's yoke on his neck, and bore clams in a pail hanging from each arm of it. The telephone interested him, as it interested all the neighbors—his time was of little value to him, for he had all the time there was—and he laid aside his burden for the moment, to render any needed assistance. Indeed, the neighborhood lived, in a fashion, on the feudal system.

Colonel Ingham, then, sat on horseback watching Larkin, who, at the top of the pole, was handling his monkey-wrench and driving his bolts as skilfully as if he had been standing at a comfortable work-bench.

"That will hold," said Larkin, cheerily, "through another September gale."

"Kin Jemimy Wilkinson walk on it?" said the gaberlunzie. He meant on the wire. Jemima Wilkinson was one of the prophetesses of that region, and, in her time, was said to walk, or not to walk, on the waters of Perch Cove.

"Et'll be a very handy thing," said Oliver to the colonel, "and the neighborhood'll be much pleased that et's finished." Such were the congratulations on the final opening up of the south part of the King's County to the rest of the world.

Meanwhile Larkin, who had needed no ladder to ascend the post, had slid down, had gathered his tools and laid them in Tom Tucker's wagon, and had mounted the horse which the colonel was holding for him. They turned their faces westward to ride to Sybaris, which was the nickname which had been given to the colonel's home.

"If I had my own way, Larkin," said the colonel, "we would have waited till the year 2999 before we established the wire. I have always bragged that I lived six miles from a door-bell or a telegraph. The two things are the same. Each is a knob at the end of a wire, which can make, if it is pulled, an infernal noise. But I have all these people coming next week, and, though they are sensible people, they will be clamoring for news before they have been in the house five minutes."

"If they want news," said Larkin, grimly, "they should not come here. When the Thetis went to pieces yonder—say thirty miles away—we learned it two days after, by picking up on the beach the cap of one of the stewards."

"Just so," said the colonel. "I have always been

glad there was one place in the world where the Khan of Tartary could not tell me his lies. But most men are not so wise as you and I are. Come up to the house with me, and have something to eat. You shall be the first man to try this plaything." And the colonel looked up at the wire.

At the house, sure enough, they found the world had arrived in full force before them. It was not ten minutes since Larkin had slid down the pole. But as the two men entered the hall at Sybaris, the telephone bell was clanging loudly, and the women-folk were in terror, asking each other to attend to the call. No one, however, knew how to stop the bell, and it had not yet occurred to any one to listen at the ear-piece.

The colonel created quiet, and listened.

"Hello!"

"Hello!"

"Colonel Ingham?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"I am Taber at the station. I have a telegram from New York from Mr. Decker on the Newport train. He has a party of four. Shall I send them, or will you send?"

"Send them over. Tell them we were waiting for them, and are glad they have come."

"That is Paul Decker and his wife," said the colonel—saying to his wife what he knew she knew as well as he—"and the Menets. It is very good to have the Menets too." And they sat down to dinner well pleased that the first voice of this doubted blessing should have been spoken in the line of hospitality.

The Inghams had been in the habit, for many years, of passing every summer at this place, a comfortable, big old house, in the southern Narragansett country, which

the whim of some of their guests had christened Sybaris. Colonel Ingham is the last man who has visited what is left of the old Sybaris, and he does not dislike to lecture to his friends on its comfortable plans.* This year he and Polly, and such of the children as were young enough not to be at the grind of life, had stayed longer than usual. And one lovely October morning, as the colonel sat in his birch canoe on the pond watching a sunrise—more marvellous even than the common—as the little craft shot along obedient to his slow paddle, the colonel said to Clara, who lay in the bow :

“Do you think you could rough it here through cold weather?”

“Papa,” cried the girl, in delight, “take care what you say!”

“Would you take the chances of December here?”

“Papa, you know we love this place as we love no other place in the world. We should like to come as early as the first day of January, and stay till after midnight on the 31st of December.”

“Then,” said the colonel, “we will have a Christmas party here.”

It was to this party that the Deckers and Menets had come.

Those who have heard Colonel Ingham preach, or have read his writings, know that he is an enthusiastic New Englander. Like all men of New England blood, he is fond of abusing the climate to which he was born. At the very bottom of his soul he wishes that the majority of the pilgrims at Leyden had voted to go to the

* See “Sybaris and Other Homes,” by Fred. Ingham.

Orinoco ; in which case, dear reader, you and I at this moment would be lying under palm trees, peeling fresh bananas, while the india-rubber trees on our plantations dropped their milky sap so that the overshoes might be rightly made in which the unfortunate North Americans might plunge through the slop and slush of next winter. But, for the sins of his ancestors, Colonel Ingham was born in the "New Society" precinct of South Warwick, in Connecticut. He afterward drifted to many parts of New England, and accounted it his good fortune that at last he found his summer home as far south in that somewhat secluded province, "as a man can go without jumping off," he said. "Climate is the principal thing," he said. "Go for climate." So he had drifted, under the lead of a wiser friend, as far south in New England as a man can go. When, in the earlier days, a stream of icebergs came grinding southward, scraping off the rough places from the White Mountains, scratching deep with cross furrows all Massachusetts, and, like so many Goths or Lombards, working always south for warm weather and their doom, it was in southern Rhode Island that they scratched their last and gave up the great bowlders which they had carried with them. There lie the bowlders to this day, big and small, making a long comb of little hills, of which the ends are gray stones separate from each other. This ridge of hills is the real southern line of New England. A few million years of ocean tides and storms have thrown up the beach which stretches from Point Judith westward along the shore, and the geologists would tell you that this beach is two miles wide. By which they mean what you and I would mean if we said there are two miles of flat, or nearly flat, land, highly cultivated in parts, between the hill range and the seas. On a high ridge of

the southern part of these hills is Sybaris. Farther on, upon the same ridge, is the little Quaker meeting-house where Colonel Ingham sometimes preaches ; it has stood there two hundred years. Farther on is the pretty tract which men still call the Narragansett reservation.

In 1675 the woody ponds which fill every little valley in these hills were the favorite haunts of the Narragansett Indians, the most courteous—nay, the most civilized tribe of New England natives. In that year Leverett, the Governor of Massachusetts Bay, had an army on foot for the extermination of Philip, King of the Wampanoags. He could not get at Philip, and, like a big boy at school, bound to hit somebody, he marched a column of a thousand Boston and Roxbury and Dorchester men across these very hills to the Narragansett fort, where the best of the Narragansett tribe was wintering. The blow came suddenly. The poor wretches fought well, but hundreds of them were killed, their houses were burned, and the power of their tribe was forever broken. At that time more people lived among these little hills and by these pretty ponds than live there to-day. The wrecks of the icebergs offer little for modern husbandry. The ponds are, in general, too small to be the reservoirs of important streams for factories. Jemima Wilkinson—of whom Oliver spoke with a certain terror—organized a colony near a hundred years ago, which carried away some of the best forces of the region to the West. And in these days, whoever wants to cultivate the ground is apt to follow her and them.

But for people who like to lead the life of Narragansetts—to paddle a birch across the lake, to travel without wheel or horse a dozen miles under odorous clethra or azalea or blazing rhododendron, to whom a tall heron or a swooping kingfisher is not an enemy to be murdered, but

a friend to be consorted with—for such as these, the southern Narragansett country still remains much what it was, when the white man added to his inheritance a territory which he did not half know how to use.

But it was not till this very year of which we are writing that Colonel Ingham had ventured to try the Narragansett country in the shortest days of winter.

He regarded the prompt acceptance of his invitation by Paul Decker and his wife as a good omen. The Menets, who were with them, he knew. He had met them in Paris. The Deckers he did not know. But he knew I knew them.

I have been intimate with Colonel Ingham all my life—have often done hard work for him, as he has for me. I was willing enough, therefore, to take a week's holiday at Christmas and start the furnace fire in my own house, not far from his, at his bidding and Polly's. And, as it happened, I met the Deckers and Menets at the station. We drove over, across the Big Swamp of King Philip's fight, together, and I left them at the colonel's door as I went on to mine, with the promise that some of us would come round in the evening.

Accordingly, after I had allotted them time enough for their oysters, their clam chowder and bluefish, their South Down mutton—for so we fondly name our Rhode Island imitation—and guessed that they had done justice to Ingham's ducks and Polly's apple-slump, café frappe and café noir—when I imagined them fooling over the Black Hamburgs, I slowly walked up the long avenue and entered unannounced, as is the custom, at the door which never had door-bell nor knocker.

Menet and Decker and their wives were old friends of mine. I had watched Mrs. Menet from her childhood, and always had been glad to know of her husband's successes. He is the great silver man—Menet, Ville Fosse & Co.—of Arizona. You may find all his history, as that of some of the rest of these people, in "Christmas in a Palace," if, by misfortune, the groaning presses do not break down in supplying the demand of the public for that volume. "There should be a copy in every family." Seven for one family is, in fifty-six million people, eight million families. If, then, we manufacture ten thousand copies a day, we shall get through with the "Palace" in two years and two months. Still, reader, there is a chance, if you rise at midnight and take your place early in the line.

Menet, I say, is the great silver man ; his wife was Minna Ville Fosse, and taught German in the college at New Padua. Decker was a clerk of Menet's. He met Theodora Bourn, or, more properly, stumbled over her in a snow-drift in the Rockies—as may also be read in "Christmas in a Palace," when your turn comes, reader.* These two spent the winter together at Piqua. And one day, when he was driving her across the country to a Grange meeting, where he was to speak about mining, he asked her to marry him. And they were married in June, and this is their first visit East since then.

Now, you know who the people were whom I found with Ingham, and Polly, and Alice, and Bertha, and Clara, pulling grapes to pieces over the dinner-table.

"I am telling Menet," said the colonel, "that he will have nothing to eat here but what grows on the premises, always excepting—"

* Number 6,537,238.

"The exceptions," said Menet, laughing. "I believe the bread was from a brand a few thousand miles west."

"Bread, it must be confessed, is an unfortunate necessity," said the colonel. "But I tell Menet, also, that he will have to be used to our people."

"You talk as if I were not a raw-boned Yankee, with high cheek-bones, and preferring to talk through my nose. Minna, there, is the foreigner."

"He is always throwing my German blood in my teeth," said the charming Mrs. Menet. "He knows I am ten times as much of a Yankee as he is. He always comes to me about his genealogy."

"Why, I found for him a thread of Hutchinson blood in his veins, of which he knew nothing; and I introduced him, at Block Island yonder, to a lovely girl, who had that perfect Ann Hutchinson face. Degenerate son! he did not know the pretty creature was his cousin."

I looked at Clara Ingham—who is allied with the Hutchinson race—and asked her if she would not sing to us her father's Hutchinson ballad. The girl went to the piano, and her father explained:

"You should know that all your ancestors, when they were exiled from Massachusetts for conscience' sake, had to come here—or most of them. Like most exiles for conscience, they were a good deal better off than they were among the people who cared to exile them. So we have constructed a tradition, for which there is good foundation, that Hutchinson and his children came trailing along this road between the hills and the sea."

"They could not help themselves," said Bertha, eagerly, "for there was no other road."

And Clara sang:

ANN HUTCHINSON'S EXILE.

A BALLAD.

1.

"Home, home—where's my baby's home?

Here we seek, there we seek, my baby's home to find.

Come, come, come, my baby, come!

We found her home, we lost her home, and home is far behind.

Come, my baby, come!

Find my baby's home!"

2.

The baby clings, the mother sings, the pony stumbles on;

The father leads the beast along the tangled, muddy way;

The boys and girls trail on behind; the sun will soon be gone,

And starlight bright will take again the place of sunny day.

"Home, home—where's my baby's home?

Here we seek, there we seek, my baby's home to find.

Come, come, come, my baby, come!

We found her home, we lost her home, and home is far behind.

Come, my baby, come!

Find my baby's home!"

3.

The sun goes down behind the lake, the night fogs gather chill,

The children's clothes are torn, and the children's feet are sore.

"Keep on, my boys; keep on, my girls, till all have passed the hill,

Then ho, my girls, and ho, my boys, for fire and sleep once more!"

And all the time she sings to the baby on her breast,

"Home, my darling, sleep, my darling, find a place for rest;

Who gives the fox his burrow will give my bird a nest.

Come, my baby, come!

Find my baby's home!"

4.

He lifts the mother from the beast, the hemlock boughs they spread,

And make the baby's cradle sweet with fern leaves and with bays.

The baby and her mother are resting on their bed,

He strikes the flint, he blows the spark, and sets the twigs ablaze.

"Sleep, my child, sleep, my child!

Baby, find her rest,

Here beneath the gracious skies, upon her father's breast ;
 Who gives the fox his burrow will give my bird her rest.
 Come, come, with her mother, come !
 Home, home, find my baby's home !''

5.

The guardian stars above the trees their loving vigil keep ;
 The cricket sings her lullaby, the whippoorwill his cheer.
 The father knows his Father's arms are round them as they sleep ;
 The mother knows that in His arms her darling need not fear.
 "Home, home, my baby's home is here ;
 With God we seek, with God we find the place for baby's rest.
 Hist, my child, list, my child ; angels guard us here.
 The God of heaven is here to make and keep my birdie's nest.
 Home, home, here's my baby's home !''

"If the snow holds off," said the colonel, "and I think it will, we will take you along the Queen's Road, which you have hardly seen yet, and you can fix the place for the ballad. We call it the Queen's Road now, since good Queen Anne set it in order for us and established her mail route upon it. It was before only an Indian trail, which they called Matanuck, which meant 'the other way.'"

"As one might say 'Heterodox,'" said Menet. And the colonel, who is a bit of an Independent, like most Rhode Islanders, was well pleased.

"I told my wife," said Mr. Menet, "that they would burn her in the Bay yonder if she asked for cranberry on Christmas Day with her salt fish. But when she asked me how it was that we came to Rhode Island for Christmas, I could not tell her when you relaxed from the sternness."

"To tell the truth," said the colonel, laughing, "the people in the Bay yielded to the dinners. For me, I was sent to school in Boston on Christmas Day all through my childhood, and should have never known the day as

different from another but for the presents of a degenerate New York cousin. But you know how even old Sewall hungered for the flesh-pots—he that hung the witches.”

No, the Menets did not know, to Colonel Ingham’s great delight. He sent Alice for Sewall’s diary, and read the passages where the governor invited the rest of the council to his Christmas dinner and passed Sewall by. It was his martyrdom. Salt fish and drawn butter at home, with wrath, rather than roast turkey and everything good at the Province House.

“And thereby hangs a tale,” said Ingham, laughing.

“Oh, read it, papa, read it!” cried the children.

And after a little pressure Colonel Ingham yielded, and read to us the story of

THE GOVERNOR’S DINNER.

CHAPTER I.

They were in the old council chamber of the old State House in Boston.

In those days men were more apt to call it the Town House.

This was the old Town House, which was burned down in the horrid fire of 1712. That fire was fourteen years after the time we write about.

The old Town House stood where our dear Boston friends see their “Old State House” every day when they go down to State Street to draw their dividends.

It was in the Council Chamber of the old Town House—as I was saying when you interrupted me—that, as the Council broke up after a sufficiently stupid session, the day before Christmas, Master Danforth talked with Major Cooke, Captain Sergeant talked with Gen-

eral Winthrop, but Judge Sewall stood alone, while Colonel Hutchinson was talking with Lord Bellomont.

Judge Sewall was not used to standing alone, and he did not like to stand alone ; all the same he stood alone, and the rest laughed and talked together.

Before the day was over, the secret came out why Judge Sewall stood alone. All secrets are sure to come out, some time or other.

The governor was to give a dinner-party the next day, and while he had asked General Winthrop, and Master Sargeant, and Colonel Hutchinson, and all the rest to his Christmas dinner, he had not asked Judge Sewall.

Judge Sewall was a little silent at his own dinner that day, and when in the afternoon half the Council came in, pretending to talk about some matter of affairs, he knew very well that that was not what they came for.

The thorn was well down in the bottom of the judge's heart, and he knew Major Cooke would drag it out before he went away.

Sure enough, as they threw on their cloaks in the ample hall of old Father Hull's house, and as they tied scarfs round their ears against the biting cold, Major Cooke asked the judge if he would be at the governor's dinner the next day.

The major knew perfectly well that the judge was not asked, and everybody knew that he was not asked. The judge said, without telling a lie, that he knew nothing of the governor's dinner. Nor did he ; nor what the dinner was to be. But he knew that it was Christmas Day, and he knew what a Christmas dinner was likely to be, and he knew that they knew that he knew it.

CHAPTER II.

The truth was that Governor Bellomont was as sorry not to ask Samuel Sewall as Samuel Sewall was not to be asked. But what could a man do ?

Here had this town of Boston lived and thrived for sixty-nine years. And when Christmas Day had come round, men had hewed their wood and drawn their water. They had split their toughest knots and broken their hardest ice into little blocks ; they had sent the boys to school and set the girls to spin ; they had taken care that the dinner should be a little more plain than common, and if they heard any man whistling in the street on that particular night they set the watch to see that he was not going to a dance-house. On any other night he might have whistled as he pleased.

Only for the year or two, when Andros the tyrant had been here, had there been any Christmas dinners at the governor's. And when Andros the tyrant gave a Christmas dinner, he knew very well whom to ask and whom not to ask. But now Andros the tyrant had gone.

And Lord Bellomont is not a tyrant in the least. To be sure on Sunday he goes to the King's Chapel, because it is the King's Chapel ; but he goes to Thursday lecture on Thursday, and the countess goes to Thursday lecture.

Lord Bellomont was walking back from Thursday lecture one day with the gentlemen of his suite, and they passed the apothecary, lounging at his shop-door.

" Oh, my dear doctor," said the lord, " you have lost a precious lecture this morning !"

" I should have gone, my lord," said the wretch, " had I been paid as well as your lordship for going."

For men will say that Lord Bellomont lives in Boston and not in New York, his other capital, because this colony pays him better than New York does.

So Lord Bellomont is no whit of a tyrant. He is a loving and peaceful governor, who lets us have our own way if we pay him two thousand pounds a year for it, and among other things goes to Thursday lecture. Such a governor is no tyrant, and he will not ruin us even if we do have roast beef and roast turkey to eat on the twenty-fifth of December.

And Lord Bellomont and the countess will have roast beef and roast turkey, and they will have oyster pies, too, and roast partridges, and they will have squash pies, and cranberry pies, and minced pies spelled with the letter y. Marlborough pyes have not yet come in.

And they will have a great plum-pudding, boiled in a bag, and when it is brought upon the table Lord Bellomont's lackey will pour a glass of brandy over it, and, just as he stands at the door, the cook will set fire to the brandy, and he will bring it in, all blazing, to the table.

And every gentleman of the Council and every magistrate in the town will be at the dinner excepting Samuel Sewall.

Now, Samuel Sewall, the judge, has been as courtly to Lord Bellomont as any man of them all. Did not he take the countess to the top of Cotton Hill the other day? It is all dug down now, Emma, and you cannot go there. I had a good crying-fit the last time I went there when I saw the horses and the carts and the men who dug it down.

But that was the year I was twelve years old. If you want to see the view which Judge Sewall showed the countess, go to 15 Pemberton Square, and ask Mr. Ladd to give you the key to the attic-stairs, and put your head

out of the open scuttleway, and look around, and you will see.

Judge Sewall showed the countess the view, and then he brought her down through the gateway of the garden—which opened about opposite where the Museum is now—and when she said she had been charmed with the view, he said he was glad, and might he not call the gate Bellomont Gate afterward? And she tapped him with her fan, and said :

“ Why, you are quite a courtier, judge.

And then he asked her into the house, and Betty Sewall brought her a glass of better Madeira than she had ever drank in her life, on a bigger silver waiter than there was on the Bellomont sideboard. And she said pretty things to Mistress Sewall, and Mistress Sewall said pretty things to her. And this was so few weeks ago, and yet the governor has not asked the judge to his dinner.

The truth is, the governor is too well-bred to ask the judge to dinner. The judge is the last of the old Puritans ; he would whip any of his smallest children who cracked a walnut or ate a raisin because Christmas Day had come. And if any of the larger children went to the King’s Chapel on Christmas Day to see the ever-greens or to hear the singing, why, the judge would put them on bread and water for a week.

Lord Bellomont is a good-natured man ; he does not want to hurt anybody’s feelings, and so he does not ask the judge to dinner !

And, on the other hand, the judge would have died before he went to dinner, only—and this is human nature, dear George and dear Harry—only he would have liked to say “ No.” It was not becoming that Major Cooke should ask him if he were going, and he

have to confess that he had not been asked ! What will people say ? What will the church-members, even, say ? What will the freemen say ? And what will this rough-scruff of those who are not " freemen " say ?

Christmas comes on Sunday this year, and the other gentlemen, as soon as meeting is over, will wear their gay red cloaks and will loiter outside the governor's house, so that people can see them. The major and the colonel will clatter in from the country on horseback—the major with his black boy, the colonel with that old Indian whom he has made a lackey of, to take care of their horses. Then the boys in the street will know that they go to the governor's dinner. Then the boys will wait to see Judge Sewall's carriage ; it is the only carriage in town. They know that he will be going, of course, and he will not be going. By eight o'clock Monday morning, in every barber's shop in the town, the news will be told that Governor Bellomont did not ask Judge Sewall to dinner.

CHAPTER III.

For us, who read this story, more things depended on that gap in the table than the mortification, great or small, of the rejected guest.

The countess knew that this was a State occasion as well as the judge. The countess was a woman, and she therefore knew some things which the Earl of Bellomont did not ; for he was only a man. The countess had therefore advised, and advised pretty earnestly, that the judge and his wife should be invited ; the countess thought they would come, in truth. Whether they came or not, she remembered the glass of Madeira, and she did not want them to be mortified.

But the earl had been stanch, and he said, "No." He represented His Majesty, and he was not going to be rebuffed by any man, though he was a good-natured earl. All the same, the countess kept open two seats till the very last.

"I tell you," said she, "that you can do it by accident, as it were ; you can do it without any fuss. You can one half invite him, and take the rest for granted ; or I shall meet her, and I will ask her, and then she will make him come."

And the earl had let it stand in this mixed-up way till the very last. This was because he was a man. But Christmas morning came, and there had been no chance, and no invitation had been given. Twenty-four plates, all marked with the Bellomont crest, had been set on the table the night before, and Lady Bellomont had only twenty guests certain, beside her husband and herself. Who should fill the two vacancies ?

Thus it happened that when the governor and his party went to church that morning, the countess had to come to the attack again.

"My dear," she said, "nothing has been heard from the judge, has there ?"

"Of course not," was the reply.

"Then," said the jolly countess, "never speak to me again, unless you bring some gentleman home with you. I will make Martha put on her silk dress, and she shall fill one seat, if you will only make sure to fill another ; but I will not have an empty seat at my table on Christmas Day."

Whether the governor would have remembered or not, I am sure I do not know. But so it happened that when the parson had well advanced in "Dearly beloved brethren," there was a little clatter at the door of the

little chapel, and steps were heard up the little aisle. A handsome young man, whose ruffle and boots showed plainly to every girl in church that the ruffle was not cut by a Boston snip, nor the boots made by a Boston cobbler, was led up the aisle by John Beadle. He was made to sit in the form, almost empty, which was opposite the governor's, and just in front of the reading-desk. The Countess of Bellomont did not look round till they came to the Creed ; but after she had looked round she looked round again ; and, by and by, under pretence of handing to the governor the right psalm in the Psalter, she took occasion to say :

“ The young gentleman in the form opposite will do ; bring him home to dinner.”

And, at last, the Christmas sermon of the parson was done. It was according to the true Episcopal standard of those days—twenty minutes in length, and of no depth at all, or breadth either. The well-bred and courtly worshippers, perhaps a hundred in number, stood and waited—first for Dr. Miles, the minister, and then for the governor, to pass. Lord Bellomont himself bowed courteously to the young stranger, who was thus preordained to be the twenty-fourth person at his table.

The stranger was standing in the form of Master Turfrey. The governor loitered a little in the porch, shaking hands with the more distinguished of the worshippers, and courteously wishing them a Merry Christmas. As Master Turfrey approached him among the last, the governor even stepped forward cordially ; and, as he put out his hand to that gentleman, he bowed again to the handsome young stranger. Master Turfrey, well pleased, named him to the governor.

“ Let me present to Your Excellency,” he said, “ Master Grove Hirst, one of our townsmen, who has

just returned from London. He came in in Shepherd, this morning."

This meant that Master Hirst was a passenger in a ship of which John Shepherd was the master. The governor saluted the young man courteously, detained him for a minute or two, in conversation on his voyage and the news he brought from England, and thus he was able to extend to him the invitation which the countess had suggested—that he should join them at their Christmas dinner.

"You shall have as good a bit of beef as you would have had in England, Mr. Hirst, and I think, Dr. Miles, that the turkey will be better."

The young man, all amazed at the ease with which honors were distributed in the new order of things, was no such fool as to hesitate. He gladly took the goods the gods had provided.

The governor's procession went on, and Master Hirst, who had gained audacity in his foreign travels, said, with alacrity, "I think this is Judge Sewall and Madam Sewall, is it not?"

The young gentleman had never seen either of them in his life.

CHAPTER IV.

The governor, and the parson, and the countess, and young Master Grove Hirst walked down School Street together, for even if the governor's carriage had arrived—and I do not think it had—he would not have used it for so short a journey.

The governor and the parson walked in front, and Master Grove Hirst and the countess walked behind, and behind them walked Mistress Martha Coote, and I don't know how many others of the governor's suite.

So it made in all quite a little procession. And as the powers ordered which had any hand in the management of this story, just as they passed Master Cheever's house—the Master Cheever who kept the school in those days,—they came full on Judge Sewall, and Mistress Sewall, and Betty Sewall, and Joe Sewall, and all the little Sewalls, who were walking up School Street from the old South Meeting-house toward Cotton Hill.

So all the Bellomont party had to lift their hats and drop their courtesies to all the Sewall party, and all the Sewall party had to do the like to the Bellomont party.

And this had to be done, even more carefully than another day, because the governor had not asked Judge Sewall to dinner, and every one except Master Grove Hirst knew that he had not asked him.

Master Grove Hirst was quite at ease, because he did not know. He was quite at ease, until, as he lifted his hat for ceremony, he saw the pretty face of Mistress Betty Sewall. Here all mere ceremony vanished from well-bred Master Grove Hirst, and he bowed profoundly as he recognized the girl. And she, ah me! she was prettier than ever, as she blushed to her eyes in the sudden recognition.

Captain Tuthill was walking by her side. He was rather dull, but I don't think even he was so dull but that he observed the special politeness with which Master Grove Hirst bowed to the young lady.

You see, it was more than a year ago since Grove Hirst had seen Betty Sewall, or as much as heard her name. It was a year ago last July that Betty Sewall was on a visit with her cousins at Salem. And one afternoon, on a frolic, they had all gone over in a boat to Marblehead Neck. And there had been a clambake on the shore. And who should appear at the clambake,

among other young men and maidens, but Master Grove Hirst ! And Master Grove Hirst and Miss Betty Sewall —well, they had spent most of the afternoon together at the clambake.

I don't know what he said to her, and I don't know what she said to him. I dare say most of it was nonsense. Indeed, I never heard a word of it. But I am sure that this Christmas, when Miss Betty Sewall met Master Grove Hirst, she remembered a good deal of it, and I know that he remembered every syllable, and could have written it all down if it were necessary.

But the very day after the clambake, Master Grove Hirst had gone out in a brig laden with barrel-staves to Lisbon. And from Lisbon he had gone to Leghorn, and from Leghorn he had gone back to Marseilles, and from Marseilles he had gone to Lisbon again, and then he had found another brig of his father's, and from Lisbon this time he had gone to Bristol, and from Bristol he had gone to London, and from London he had gone back to Marseilles ; then from Marseilles he had gone back to London again, and so it was that for near a year and a half he had never heard a word of pretty Mistress Betty Sewall.

Still, Master Grove Hirst had remembered Mistress Betty Sewall all the same, and I am afraid that Betty Sewall had remembered him, although she had heard no word of him in these seventeen months.

And this was the reason why Master Grove Hirst bowed so profoundly when he met the young lady. As I have said, Captain Tuthill was not pleased that Mr. Hirst bowed so profoundly, but the captain could not help himself, and he was fain to make no remark on the occasion.

When the Sewall party arrived at old Father Hall's

house, about where you stop to-day if you want to buy a plaster from Mr. Metcalf, Captain Tuthill had to bid Betty Sewall good-day. Had it been any other day but Christmas, Judge Sewall would have asked that gentleman in to dinner. For he was hospitable, and he knew that Captain Tuthill had a good estate. It would have been very queer had he not guessed also how much Captain Tuthill liked Betty Sewall. But it was Christmas Day, and by the same token that Lord Bellomont could not ask Judge Sewall, Judge Sewall could not ask Captain Tuthill to dine.

So the captain went wofully away.

CHAPTER V.

And so it was that the Reverend Dr. Miles and Mr. Grove Hirst were the first guests to arrive at the governor's dinner.

But it was not long before generals, and colonels, and judges, and their wives began to appear. They were all a little frightened, perhaps; for they knew, every mother's son of them, and every father's daughter of them, that their fathers and mothers would have died before they would have bowed down to such idolatry. But they had quieted their consciences in some way, and here they were. The men rubbed their hands in front of the cheerful hickory fire. The women gathered in little knots, scrutinized each other's dress, and said little.

"We should treat these gentlemen well, dame," whispered the governor, as Wait Winthrop and Mr. Addington came in. "They give us our bread."

"Never fear me with the gentlemen," said the jolly countess; "only you take care of the ladies."

And, to tell the truth, the earl's share was harder than

the countess's. But he did his best, and before long he had the pleasure of seeing all the twenty-four chairs filled. Master Grove Hirst, as the last comer, and of the lowest rank, sat half way down the table. He had taken into dinner Miss Martha Coote, a cousin of the governor's—the same lady who would have been overseeing the cook in the kitchen had Madam Sewall and her husband come to the dinner.

The talk went on as briskly as it might. But where there is a little awkwardness at the bottom, even a cordial earl and a jolly countess find that things drag a little. They had pounded away on the last news from Captain Kidd—on the messenger who came from the Penobscots on Thanksgiving Day, on the reason why wheat had been blasted, on the misfortune to the oysters in the Plymouth colony. The governor had kept the Madeira going pretty freely, and the dame had pressed everybody to eat turkey from the thirty-five-pounder before her, till they could eat no more.

At last, in despair, the earl spoke down the table, where Mr. Grove Hirst had been keeping up small-talk with Miss Martha Coote.

“Did you see the Czar, Mr. Hirst, in London?”

“I had very good luck, my lord. He came on board Captain Shepherd, with a party of Muscovites. They wanted to see some of our New England ways.”

“Ah ha! Indeed! So you could teach the wild bear a thing or two.”

“Did he hug very hard?” said the countess, from her end of the table.

“Not so hard but that I am here, my lady. To say the truth, they all liked the good Jamaica our captain gave them; and when he treated with some figs we had on board, they ate them as Mashpee Indians

would have done. Their tooth is as sweet as any savage's."

"I like a good fig myself," said the earl, "and I hope your good friend Shepherd has not given them all to the Czar."

At this there was a little laugh, and Mr. Hirst hastened to say that he was sure Captain Shepherd would give the earl a chance to see what cargo he had brought with him. And so a safe subject was well introduced, and what with Peter the Great, and the fire at Whitehall, and Lord Portland's mission to France, the dinner went forward bravely, till the plum-pudding and the burning brandy came.

And before the dinner was over Mr. Grove Hirst was in prime favor with the earl and the countess, and every counsellor and every magistrate knew it. Pretty well for a young man twenty-three years old, who had followed the sea for half his life and had never dined with a governor before. But such are the chances on which turn the fate of kings and of nations. What would have happened to Mr. Grove Hirst if Judge Sewall had been asked to dinner, I am sure I do not know !

CHAPTER VI.

Betty Sewall had made very short answers to Captain Zachariah Tuthill as they walked up the hill together, and I am by no means sure that she knew what she said to him. I think she would have known if she had not met Grove Hirst. But, to tell the truth, the moment she saw him her mind ran back to the Marblehead rocks and to that pleasant summer afternoon.

It was only a day or two after that Betty Sewall's father went round to see Mr. Mico. He pretended he

went to inquire about some lumber which Mr. Mico wanted to sell. But he did go to inquire about Captain Zachariah Tuthill.

Mr. Mico said that he never heard any ill of him. He said he was in good business and like to be in better. He said his estate was six or seven hundred pounds. He said if he had a sister whose father was going to settle a thousand pounds on her, he would be glad to have Captain Tuthill ask for her. This was all Judge Sewall got from Mr. Mico, and this the judge told his wife, and this Madam Sewall told Mistress Betty. But I appeal to any good girl to know whether she thinks this amounted to a great deal. If Captain Tuthill had been tender and entertaining and unaffected—in short, if he had been “nice,” this would all have been very well. But as it was, to know that old Mr. Mico had never heard any ill of him was certainly very little.

“Why,” said Miss Betty, pertly, but truly, “I do not suppose Mr. Mico ever heard any ill of old Rocket.”

Now, old Rocket was the Indian who cleaned the judge’s boots and split the wood for the judge’s fire.

But it made no difference what Mistress Betty said. Thursday night came round, ten days after Christmas, and, after the candles were lighted, Betty found herself sitting alone. Her father and mother had gone over to Mr. Willard’s, to see about Mrs. Moody’s funeral. So the judge said; but Betty knew it was so they might be out of the way. None of the boys or girls were at home, and Betty knew that they had been sent off. She was “mad as fire,” as she told Eunice Scott afterward; but the poor girl could not help herself, or thought so. So, at seven o’clock came the knock at the front door, and then that grinning Dinah showed in Captain Zachariah Tuthill. He was got up in his best sailor finery.

A gold chain from the Congo coast hung at his fop. A great turquoise blazed on his finger, and his ruffles, said Betty, when she told Ennice the next day, looked as if they had been starched by the Queen of Ashantee.

Captain Tuthill urged his suit, a good deal as he might have urged the men in the tops to take in the topsail in a gale. At least, so Betty pretended, when she saw Eunice. I am afraid Betty exaggerated. But, on the other hand, I am afraid he was a little peremptory. As for Betty, she was at first silent, then she screwed herself up to the point. She succeeded in keeping her temper, and she succeeded also in saying, "No."

Then the captain was more peremptory.

Betty was still civil, but she was as firm as the rocks below Mr. Eliot's meeting-house.

Then Captain Tuthill was indignant, and talked about what her father had said, and what Mr. Mico had said, and what he had expected. Then Betty's wrath waxed hot. She told him that he didn't know how to speak to a gentlewoman. She stood up and opened the door and asked him to go.

And when the captain blundered out an apology and talked about his love for her, the girl's rage upset her completely. She told him that if he stayed in that room a moment longer she would call old Rocket, and old Rocket should put him out of the door.

This was outrageous in Miss Betty; but, as has been said, she had been put in an outrageous mood. Captain Tuthill went out of the door without Rocket's assistance. Then Betty Sewall ran up crying to her room, and flung herself on her bed.

CHAPTER VII.

Meanwhile, Master Grove Hirst had been following his hand, as the ungodly say. But no such wanton expressions were spoken or heard in circles where Betty Sewall moved.

On Monday morning a package of the choicest figs had gone to Lady Bellomont with Mr. Grove Hirst's respectful duty. The same afternoon a box of a dozen bottles of Alicant went to Lord Bellomont, to his private room at the Town House, with Mr. Grove Hirst's humble respects to His Excellency.

Within a day or two Mr. Grove Hirst had been sent for to see His Excellency. His Excellency had given the young man a very courteous reception; had talked with him about English politics; had asked about his next voyage, and in every way had shown that he would be his friend. Nay, he had asked him to call and see the countess, and this the young man was fain to do. And this time the bright young courtier asked if he might have the privilege of presenting to Mistress Martha Coote a little box of feathers which he had brought from Nantes with him. He was told that they were quite the *mode* at the French court.

Really, Master Hirst, for a youngster who went to Nantes to barter salt codfish for olives, you are coming on very well!

And Judge Sewall saw Mr. Grove Hirst once and again at the Council Chamber. But the audacious youngster could contrive no way in which to be presented to Judge Sewall. The wound in the judge's heart was too sore. All the town knew who took his place at the governor's Christmas party.

In the judge's eyes Mr. Grove Hirst was, to all men,

the visible symbol of his disgrace. Whatever other man the judge would speak to in the little town, he would not speak to Mr. Grove Hirst. And, as you know, the poor judge has many things just now to make him testy. Here is Mr. Mico enraged with the treatment of his friend. Here is Captain Tuthill coming in, three times a day, to know when he may see Mistress Betty again. And Betty's eyes are red and her cheeks are pale every time the judge sees her. Every way the poor judge is very unhappy. But, all the same, he blunders on, for he is only a man, though he be a magistrate; and he tells Captain Tuthill to try again. He tells him that "faint heart never won fair lady." And Captain Tuthill sends round to Madam Sewall, with his respectful duty, a Panama basket with two ostrich eggs in it, and some cowries and other shells. And Betty Sewall laughs like a wild creature, and says this is what the King of Ashantee—for so she chooses to dub Captain Tuthill—has sent for purchase-money. Mark you, I do not know that Captain Tuthill was in the slave-trade. I only know that Betty Sewall said he was.

Poor Betty Sewall! I can almost forgive her if she were a little enraged. The week before Christmas she did not speak of Captain Tuthill as if he were the King of Ashantee. When Eunice Scott, and Miriam Addington, and Esther Aspinwall, and the other girls talked of Captain Tuthill, whom they had met at a husking-party at the Williams's, in Roxbury, nobody had called him the King of Ashantee. And even on the morning of Christmas Day, when he called at the judge's house, and walked down to meeting with Madam Sewall, nobody called him the King of Ashantee. And, when meeting was over, and her father and mother went first, nobody called him the King of Ashantee. It had only been

since she met Grove Hirst that day that she had called him the King of Ashantee.

And what was Grove Hirst to her? the poor girl kept saying. Why should she be thinking of Grove Hirst morning, noon, and night, and between whiles? Grove Hirst showed no signs of thinking of her! Here it was a fortnight or more since Christmas. All the other girls had seen Grove Hirst, and she had not seen him. Poor Betty did not remember that she would not go to Madam Sergeant's quilting, and that it was after the quilting that the other girls saw him! Poor Betty did not know that Grove Hirst was at meeting on New Year's Day, and waited at the wrong door, in hope of at least bowing to her again! Poor Betty forgot that she would not go to meeting in the afternoon! Poor Betty forgot everything but that people wanted her to marry the King of Ashantee, and that she hated him!

CHAPTER VIII.

And Madam Sewall had to tell Betty that the captain was to call again. Betty was very wild; she would only say that she expected him—that after he had paid the ostrich eggs he was entitled to his wife. Poor Dame Sewall tried to laugh at this. She would have soothed Betty if she could, but Betty would not be soothed. Her mother told her to be ready in the evening to see him. It was a very quiet table at tea-time, you may be sure; and in the evening, at last, he came.

But where was Betty? She was here just now. There is the stocking she was mending, and her ball of yarn. The captain looked round meekly; Madam Sewall was courtesy itself, and so was the judge. At a nod from their mother the children took their books

into the kitchen. Talk dragged a little, and at last the judge said, "Will you call Betty, my dear?"

So Madam Sewall went to call Betty, and at last she called very loud; but no Betty came. And Madam Sewall sent the boys to Mr. Cotton's, and even as far as Captain Southack's and the Endicotts'. The boys were to say that their sister must come back for a very particular reason. The girl's hood and her hat were in her room. Madam Sewall came back with an anxious look, and said Betty would soon be there.

And Judge Sewall and the captain droned on and on about cowries and Congo and the middle passage. And Betty did not come at all. The captain stayed an hour, and went away in a rage.

Then Madam Sewall told her husband, and then he was well frightened. He put on his cloak and went out; he even demeaned himself to ask the watch if they had seen her. Poor man! He went down to the dock and looked weakly over. There was a sort of joy to him to see the ice, which he had forgotten. But how many coves there were, where a wild girl might run down upon the ice, and who should say how far she would go then?

Poor Judge Sewall! He came home sadder than ever; and as he passed the governor's house there was music and dancing. Could they dance so, and his poor Betty stark and cold in the bay yonder?

"No, Hannah, I have not found her!"

"And she is not here!" sobbed his poor wife.

So they sat an hour, or sat and stood, or they walked the room, looked out at the door, and sat again.

It was not till the clock pointed to eleven that quietly the door opened and Betty came in.

"My dear child, where have you been?"

“Where should I be, my dear mother? I have been sitting in the coach in the coach-house!”

Was the girl stark mad?

No, I think she was not stark mad; but I think she would have been had she not gone into the coach-house. Sometimes our good angels take better care of us than we take of ourselves.

When the horrid knocker sounded, when the judge went into the hall to meet his guest, when her mother passed round and snuffed the candles, Betty had stepped out at the side-door, run through the back entry, and, wholly without being noticed by Dinah or by old Rocket, run across the plank path to the coach-house, where stood the judge's carriage. The carriage was crowded on one side so that the sleigh and the “booby-hut,” as the Boston of that day called a coach on runners, might be ready.

The girl caught up a bear-skin and wrapped it round her, and sank into the corner of the carriage, sobbing.

For two minutes there was dead silence. Then, tap—tap—tap at the door.

Betty did not breathe.

Tap—tap—tap.

Still she made no answer. They had driven her to the walls, and now they might send for the watch or the sheriff. But she would not surrender.

Tap—tap—tap, and then the door is flung open.

A man comes in. Betty does not move. He crosses the light of the open doorway. She does not breathe.

“Mistress Betty, Mistress Betty. Can I not serve you in any way?”

No answer.

“I beg your pardon for breaking in on your privacy. But if you knew how I had sought to see you. Indeed,

Mistress Sewall—I was—I was watching your window from the hill-top. I saw you cross the court—and—and I made so bold as to come in.”

The girl did not speak then. But she sobbed. And the young man knew where she was, and came where he could speak in low tones.

She sank back in the great carriage, sobbing. The young man did not know what to do, and he did the right thing without knowing it. This was because he acted on the impulses of a gentleman. Grove Hirst turned to the open sleigh beside him and took out a heavy wolf-skin. He wrapped it around the lady, as if he were making her ready for a sleigh-ride. He asked her if her head rested easily, as simply as if it were a matter of course that she should be sitting there.

“Oh, dear, yes!” stammered the poor girl. And then she rested, and, after a moment, “Now, please leave me—leave me alone.”

“I will leave you, if you say so,” said the young man, respectfully, “but I cannot leave you till I tell you why I came. It is not only since Christmas Day, it is since that day at the beach, that I have thought of you, and hoped for you, and prayed for you, every hour of my life, Mistress Betty. Every day since I landed here I have wanted to say as much to you, but your father is displeased with me, I know not why. I sent a basket of fruit to you, and he sent it back again. I made bold to send a letter, and the Indian brought it to my lodgings again within an hour. If this is at your order, I will receive your judgment, like a man. But I am proud, and I will take my fate from no lips but yours.”

Betty had sprung up in the carriage, and had her foot upon the step.

“ They sent back your letter ? ” cried she ; “ then I am a prisoner indeed ! ”

For an instant the young man was as happy, perhaps, as he ever had been in his life. But for an instant only. The girl had fallen back on the seat and was sobbing, almost hysterically. The youngster did not know what to do or to say to comfort her.

“ Shall I call your mother ? shall I call your maid ? ”

“ Call nobody. Do not speak aloud,” said Betty, almost whispering. And then when he hesitated a moment, “ I am very foolish ; do not think I am bold,” and she laughed, “ for I am frightened to death. It is because I am frightened that I say what I say. Please do not go away,” and she laughed again. “ That’s a pretty speech for a girl to make, but I am so frightened. I must stay here. Nobody must know it. And I dare not stay here alone.”

Now is your chance, Mr. Grove Hirst, to show yourself what you are—a gentleman through and through.

The youngster bowed most respectfully, as he might have done to his queen. “ I am so glad I can serve you,” he said, in a whisper. “ I will stay till you bid me go. Are you sure you are warm ? ”

And once more, without a single allusion to what he had said of his own passion—without presuming, even in a breath, to inquire as to her secret, he assumed the tone which he might have taken if she were Mrs. Martha Coote—if she were sitting in a chair at the governor’s and he standing at her side, with a hundred people looking on. In a minute the girl had recovered her composure in the contagion of his. In a minute more she had almost forgotten where she was, as the young man skillfully used up the time in inquiries about their Salem friends and in other commonplace. And when she was

at last at ease, and did forget herself so that she could speak like the gentlewoman that she was, he cherished every word, so simply but so grandly ! And he answered what she said about his travels so modestly ! And then what he said—it was just what a gentleman should say. It was what a gentleman should have seen—it was told as a gentleman should tell it.

Ah me ! how the time flew by ! It is absurd to say they forgot where they were ; but the truth was, they often did forget it. Please to remember that he had been waiting for this hour for a year and six months more. They both started when the hall-clock struck eleven.

“ It must be ten o’clock,” said poor Betty. “ He must be gone now. I will go in.”

Grove Hirst led her to the door of the house.

“ When may I have the honor of waiting upon you ?” said he.

“ That will be for my father to say,” said Betty, as proud as ever.

CHAPTER IX., AND LAST.

Captain Tuthill came the next day, and spoke with Miss Betty in her father’s presence ; but nothing came of it. The next day he came again ; but there was company, and the judge sent him away and bade him come again. I am sure I do not know how often he would have come, but that one day, after the Council, the Earl of Bellomont, with great cordiality, asked Judge Sewall if he would stay a moment for private conference. He then told the judge that he wanted his confidential advice in regard to that knotty matter about the title to Martha’s Vineyard. “ Young Hirst tells me,” he said, “ that your notion of such things is worth more than

that of a dozen of our friends here, and that all the province says so. I had guessed as much already. They will all be gossiping if I keep you here. Could you and Madam Sewall come and take pot-luck with us to-morrow at dinner? And bring your pretty daughter. The countess has taken a fancy to her. Then people will not think that we mean to talk business."

The judge walked on air as he went home. But when they went to the dinner the next day, he did not walk on air—they rode in the coach; and as her father put the wolf-skin over Betty's knee, she remembered who was the last person to wrap it round her.

It was not quite a family dinner. Besides the governor's household, was Master Grove Hirst. And at the beginning of the Martha's Vineyard conference Master Grove Hirst was called in; but long before it was ended he was sitting by Betty Sewall's side, while Lady Bello-mont and Madam Sewall and Mistress Martha Coote discussed the best recipe for diet-drink.

What did he say to Betty Sewall?

I am sure I do not know; I only know that the Hirsts of to-day are his great-great-great-grandsons, and hers too. I believe his courtship had its ups and downs; but in her older years she used to tell the children on Christmas Days that none of them would have been there if her father had been bidden to the GOVERNOR'S DINNER.

"Is it true, Colonel Ingham?" said Mrs. Menet, when she thanked him.

"That is a question you must not ask. All I can say is, it seems to be true, and you will find the main points of it are in Judge Sewall's diary."

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning a messenger to our house brought a scrap of paper from Mrs. Ingham, saying that they were to drive along the beach, the tide being low. Would not some of ours join the expedition?

“Messenger to our house” sounds sufficiently grand. The truth is, that as little Will Miller brought over our milk from Saxton’s, the colonel hailed him, and threw Polly’s note out of the window. But you must allow a conventional phrase sometimes. The boy was “a messenger,” and if I had chosen to call him “an apostle” you should not have interrupted.

So it was that when the beach wagon from the colonel rattled along, and Clara and pretty Theodora Decker followed, each in the saddle, in their trig riding-habits, we added two cavaliers and another beach wagon to the party, and all rode down the drift-way together to Rocky Point.

“Drift-way,” as the colonel explained to Mr. Menet, is a phrase, not to be found in the dictionaries, to denote a cross-road to the sea by which the sea-weed, the great wealth of our farmers, may be hauled up to their homes. Sometimes a farmer will send nine miles for his loads of this drift, a manure almost ready made to his hand.

Block Island stood out clear against the southern horizon, lifted a little from the sea by a mirage.

We were at the beach in fifteen minutes. The tide was out, and the smooth gray sand stretched wide be-

tween the little green hills and the sea, delightful to the eye of the riders. They turned their horses westward, where the beach stretches some fifteen miles toward Watch Hill, and began scampering to and fro. We seniors drew up more quiet ; we lifted Mrs. Menet down from the carriage and seated her, well wrapped, in the most comfortable nook, where a shelter from the wind and an awning, if she chose, from the sun, protected her from too much of either ; and as the low December sun shone on all her person except her face, we told her to imagine the long "Sand Congresses" of July and August, when, in this temple, dedicated to loafing and to talk, hours had flown by, freighted with stories which, alas ! may never be heard again.

Here has William Hunt, prince of story-tellers as of artists, told of adventures of the ant king, and dug his hole for him in the sand ! Here has Henry Bellows fought over the battles of Round Hill, and made us laugh within an edge of despair as he led us up the Nile or down the slopes of Lebanon ! Here for years to come shall the genial doctor from North Avenue, and the Royall professor tell their tales of other lands ! Here shall Colonel Joyce, of Indianapolis, tell how he was walking on the Rue de Rivoli, on the Prado, or on the beach at Ramleh ! Here, in a temple of talk, we made Menet tell the story of what might happen to a man who lost a cent ! I can never reproduce it with his fun ; but as I cut it from a newspaper afterward, here it is :

ONE CENT.

A Christmas Story.

SCENE I.—DOWN.

Mr. Starr rose very early that day. The sun was not up. Yet, certainly, it was too light to strike a match. Ah, Mr. Starr, a match may be an economy !

So it was that when, as always, the keys jingled out from his trowsers pockets upon the floor, and the money as well, one cent rolled under the bureau unseen by Mr. Starr. He went down to his work now, after he had gathered up the rest of the money and the keys, and answered yesterday's letters.

Then, of course, he could loiter over his breakfast.

But not too long. Clara, his wife, was in good spirits, and the boys were very jolly, but Mr. Starr, all the same, did the duty next his hand. He "kissed her good-by," and started down-town. Edgar stopped him to ask for fifty cents for his lunch ; the postman wanted fifteen for an under-paid parcel ; Susan, the maid, asked for ten for some extra milk ; and then he kissed his hand to the parlor window, and was off.

No ! He was not off.

For Clara threw up the window and waved her lily hand. Mr. Starr ran back to the door. She flung it open.

"My dear John, here is your best coat. That coat you have on has a frayed button. I saw it yesterday, and I cannot bear to have you wear it at the Board."

"Dear Clara, what a saint you are !" One more kiss, and Mr. Starr departed.

And loyally he did the duty next his hand. He stopped and signed the sewerage petition ; he looked in

on poor Colt and said a cheerful word to him ; he bade Woolley, the fruit man, send a barrel of Nonesuch to old Mrs. Cowen ; he was on time at the Board meeting, took the chair, and they changed the constitution. He looked in at the office and told Mr. Freemantle he should be late, but that he would look at the letters when he came back, and then, ho ! for East Boston !

If only you knew, dear readers, that to East Boston you must go by a ferry-boat, as if it were named Greenbush, or Brooklyn, or Camden.

As Mr. Starr took the street car after he had crossed the ferry, to go into the unknown parts of East Boston, he did notice that he gave the conductor his last ticket. But what of that ? “End of the route” came, and he girded his loins, trudged over to the pottery he was in search of, found it at last, found the foreman and gave his orders, and then, through mud unspeakable, waded back to the street car. He was the only passenger. No wonder ! The only wonder was that there was a car.

“Ticket, sir,” said the conductor, after half a mile.

Mr. Starr (smiling). “I have no ticket, but you may sell me a dollar’s worth.” (*Feels for pocketbook.*)
“Hello ! I have not my pocketbook ; changed my coat.”

Conductor (savagely). “They generally has changed their coats.”

Mr. Starr (with dignity, offering a five-cent nickel).
“There’s your fare, man.”

Conductor. “That won’t do, mud-hopper. Fare’s six cents.”

Mr. Starr (well remembering the cent which is, alas ! under the bureau, and grovelling for it in both pockets).
“I have a cent somewhere.”

Conductor (stopping car and returning five-cent piece).

“We’ve had enough of you tramps who change your coats and cannot find your pennies. You step off—and step off mighty quick.”

Mr. Starr declines; when they come to Maverick Square he will report the man to the superintendent, who knows him well. Slight scuffle. Mr. Starr resists. Conductor calls driver. Mr. Starr is ejected. Coat torn badly and hat thrown into mud. Car departs.

TABLEAU.

SCENE II.—UP.

(*Muddy street in East Boston. Mr. STARR, wiping his hat with his handkerchief, solus.*)

Mr. Starr. “If only Clara had not been so anxious about the Board meeting!” (*Eyes five-cent piece.*) “Where can that penny be?” (*Searches in pockets, is searching when—*)

(*Enter R. H. U. E. span of wild horses, swiftly dragging a carryall. In the carryall two children screaming. Speed of horses, 2.41.*)

Mr. Starr. “Under the present circumstances life is worthless, or nearly so. Let me bravely throw it away!” (*Rushes upon the span. Catches each horse by the bit, and by sheer weight controls them. Horses on their mettle; Mr. STARR on his. Enter, running, JOHN CRADOCK.*)

John Cradock. “Whoa, whoa! Ha! they stop. How can I thank you, my man? You have saved my children’s lives.”

Mr. Starr (*still holding bits*). “You had better take the reins.”

John Cradock mounts the seat, seizes reins, but is eager to reward the poor, tattered wretch at their heads. Passes reins to right hand, and with left feels for a half

eagle, which he throws, with grateful words, to Mr. Starr. Mr. Starr leaves the plunging horses, and they rush toward Prescott Street. (*Exeunt JOHN CRADOCK, horses and children.*)

Half amused, half ashamed, Mr. Starr picks up the coin, which he also supposes to be half an eagle.

It proves to be a bright penny, just from the mint.

Mr. Starr lays it with delight upon the five-cent nickel.

(*Enter a street car, L. H. L. E. MR. STARR waves his hand with dignity, and enters car. Pays his fare, six cents, as he passes conductor.*)

In fifteen minutes they are at Maverick Square. Mr. Starr stops the car at the office of Siemens & Bessemer, and enters. Meets his friend Fothergill.

Fothergill. "Bless me, Starr, you are covered with mud! Pottery, eh? Runaway horse, eh? No matter; we are just in time to see Wendell off. William, take Mr. Starr's hat to be pressed. Put on this light overcoat, Starr. Here is my tweed cap. Now, jump in and we will go to the Samaria to bid Wendell good-by."

And indeed they both found Wendell. Mr. Starr bade him good-by, and advised him a little about the man he was to see in Dresden. He met Herr Birnebaum, and talked with him a little about the chemistry of enamels. Oddly enough, Fonseca was there, the attaché, the same whom Clara had taken to drive at Bethlehem. Mr. Starr talked a little Spanish with him. Then they were all rung on shore.

TABLEAU : *Departing steamer. Crowd waves handkerchiefs.*

CHAPTER III.—CHRISTMAS—THE END.

At Mr. Starr's Christmas dinner, beside their cousins from Harvard College and their second cousins from Wellesley College and their third cousins from Bradford Academy, they had young Clifford, the head book-keeper. As he came in, joining the party on their way home from church, he showed Mr. Starr a large pareel.

"It's the Alaska's mail, and I thought you might like to see it."

"Ah well!" said Mr. Starr, "it is Christmas, and I think the letters can wait, at least, till after dinner."

And a jolly dinner it was. Turkey for those who wished, and goose for those who chose goose. And, when the Washington pie and the Marlboro' pudding came, the squash, the mince, the cranberry-tart, and the blazing plum-pudding, then the children were put through their genealogical catechism.

"Will, who is your mother's father's mother's father?"

"Lucy Pico, sir!" and then great shouting. Then was it that Mr. Starr told the story which the reader has read in chapter one—of the perils which may come when a man has not a penny. He did not speak hastily, nor cast reproach on Clara for her care of the button. Over that part of the story he threw a cautious veil. But to boys and girls he pointed a terrible lesson of the value of one penny.

"How dangerous, papa, to drop it into a box for the heathen!"

But little Tom found this talk tiresome, and asked leave to slip away, teasing Clifford as he went about some postage-stamps Clifford had promised him.

“Go bring the parcel I left on the hall table, and your papa will give you some Spanish stamps.”

So the boy brought the mail.

“What in the world is this?” cried Mr. Starr, as he cut open the great envelope; and more and more amazed he was as he ran down the lines:

“*Much Esteemed and Respected Señor—Don John Starr, Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece.*

“SENOR: It is with true yet inexpressible satisfaction that I write this private note, that I may be the first of your friends in Madrid to say to you that the order for your creation as a Knight Companion of the much esteemed and truly venerable Order of the Golden Fleece passed the seals of the Chancellerie yesterday. His Majesty is pleased to say that your views on the pacification of Porto Rico coincide precisely with his own; that the hands of the government will be strengthened as with the force of giants when he communicates them to the very excellent and much honored governor of the island, and that, as a mark of his confidence, he has the pleasure of sending to you the cordon of the order, and of asking your acceptance.’

“My dear Lady Dulcinea del Toboso, that is what came to you when that Cradock man threw a cent into the mud for me.”

“But, papa, what are the other letters?”

“Oh, yes, what are they? Here is English; it’s from Wendell. H’m—h’m—h’m. Short passage. Worcestershire—h’m—Wedgewood—h’m—Staffordshire—h’m. Why, Clara, George, listen:

“‘I suppose you will not be surprised when I say that your suggestion made on the deck of the Samaria, as to oxalate of strontium, was received with surprise by Herr Fernow and Herr Klec. But such is the respect in

which suggestions from America are now held, that they ordered a trial at once in the Royal kilns, the result of which are memoranda A and B, enclosed. They are so much delighted with these results that they have formed a syndicate with the Winkels, of Potsdam, and the Schonhoffs, of Berlin, to undertake the manufacture in Germany ; and I am instructed to ask you whether you will accept a round sum, say 150,000 marks, for the German patent, or join them, say as a partner, with twenty per cent of stock in their adventure.'

"I think so," said Mr. Starr. "That is what the bright penny comes to at compound interest. Let us try Birnebaum's letter."

Gottfried Birnebaum to John Starr.

"MY HONORED SIR : I am at a loss to express to you the satisfaction with which I write. The eminently practical suggestions which you made to me so kindly and freely, as we parted, have, indeed, also proved themselves undoubtedly to be of even the first import. It has to me been also, indeed, of the very first pleasure to communicate them, as I said indeed, to the first director in charge at the works at Sèvres, as I passed through Paris, and now yet again, with equal precision also and readiness, to the Herr first fabricant at Dresden. Your statement regarding the action of the oxides of gold, in combination with the tungstate of Bdelium, has more than in practice verified itself. I am requested by the authorities at Dresden to ask the acceptance, by your accomplished and highly respected lady, of a dinner set of their recent manufacture, in token small of their appreciation, renewed daily, of your contribution so valuable to the resources of tint and color in their rooms of

design ; and M. Foudroyant, of Sèvres, tells me also, by telegraph of to-day, that to the same much esteemed and highly distinguished lady he has shipped by the San Laurent a tea service, made to the order of the Empress of China, and delayed only by the untoward state of hostilities, greatly to be regretted, on the Annamite frontier.' ”

Mr. Starr read this long-winded letter with astonishment.

“ Well, Dulcinea, you will be able to give a dinner party to the King of Spain when he comes to visit you at Toboso.’ ”

So much for Brother Cradock’s penny.

“ Dear John, till I die I will never be afraid to call you back when your buttons are tattered.’ ”

“ And for me,” said little Jack, “ I will go now and look under the bureau for the lost cent, and will have it for my own.’ ”

(*Enter servants, R. H. L. E., with the Dresden china.*

They meet other servants, L. H. L. E., with the Sèvres china.)

TABLEAU.

CURTAIN.

But at this point Mrs. Menet was observed to draw her shawl around her, and the encampment was broken up. For many years the colonel will brag of it, and will say, “ Even to December we sit in the open air,” the truth being, that, for twenty years, no one has sat there in December before, and that no one will for twenty years more. A sharp whistle brought in the cavorting cavaliers. “ We will go home by Green Hill,” shouted the

colonel ; and so the horses were turned westward, and we all bowled over the long beach, with the blue Atlantic on our left. And the colonel had a chance to discourse on geology when, in the course of two or three miles, we came to the curious terraces of cobble-stones which are the unexplained marvel of the coast.

And so, unwillingly enough, we turned up from the beach, and by another "drift-way" we found the Queen's Road again, and there the directors of the drive made us turn eastward and go home. The wonders of Queen Betsy's grave, the terrors of Dead Man's Brook, Mr. Baker's pretty cottage on the Narragansett Reservation, and the true spelling of Quonochontang were all left for some longer forenoon. So was it, that when we all drove up to the colonel's to the meal which that day was called dinner—as the day before it was called lunch—we all had earned our appetites. The young people's cheeks were rosy red, and Mrs. Menet said she could eat anything, from grizzly bear round to walrus, she was so hungry.

It was just as the clam-chowder was served at this two-named meal, that Mrs. Menet and Theodora were telling of their Christmas a year before, snow-bound in the Rockies, and she was descanting on some kindness of that bright, jolly Mrs. Fréchette. The colonel heard her through, led her on a little to expatiate on that lady's fun and good-nature, and then said :

"I thought you might like to see her again, and so I have written for them both to join our party here. And if your seat was where mine is, you would at this moment see Taber's big beach wagon bringing her and her husband by Saxton's house. In three minutes you will be kissing her !"

Theodora screamed, as in this business-like way he

broke his little secret to her. They are not very ceremonious at the colonel's table, as she had already found out. She ran to the window, and, sure enough, she could see the wagon. In three minutes more all parties were on the stoop of the house, kissing and exclaiming. And even Ingham himself was surprised, for Taber had sent over not one carriage, but two, and in the second were Felix Carter and his wife, with two of their children.

"Fréchette dropped me a telegram to say they were coming, and I thought you would not know how to place them unless we were here."

"Are you Felix Carter?" said Mrs. Menet, when I presented him to her.

"The same," said Felix, laughing.

"Are you the man who—"

"Now I shall know," said Felix, "what I am distinguished for, what is the 'line of my genius.' Mr. Emerson says, 'Buy books in the line of your genius.' I have always been trying to find out what mine was."

Mrs. Menet said, "Alas! I cannot tell you. If only you would tell me about mine! What I meant to ask was, if you were the man who, having discovered a paradise in Mexico, calmly deserted it, and spent his winters here?"

The story to which Mrs. Menet alluded had been told to her, a year before, when she was snow-bound in the mountains.*

"I am that very man," said Felix, welcoming the spirited little woman at once into the fraternity or sisterhood of people "with an atmosphere." "And when you

* See "Our Christmas in a Palace," p. 207.

know this region better, you will not give us so much credit for philosophy."

"But," said she, timidly, "I see that the colonel's hospitality is charming. Still—you know—I cannot explain myself. Fergus, I am trying to make Mr. Carter understand that it is not a harsh climate only that makes one leave his home."

Fergus Menet laughed.

"Nor is it grizzly bears," said he, "nor any other four-legged or hundred-legged gadflies."

"Indeed no," said his poor wife. "It is the bores—especially the philanthropic bores—the bores who expect you to abandon all other duties and accept at once their particular scheme for the renovation of the world."

"Have you none of them here, Colonel Ingham?"

"None of them?" said the colonel. "Why, Mrs. Menet, the first morning I lived in this house a lady came over from Providence to ask me if I had such a thing as a hundred thousand dollars about me which I could give toward the establishment of Fitz-Clarence College in Dakota, which would be sold under the hammer if I did not advance the funds.

" 'Yeh live a good deal out of the way,' said the lady president. 'Et tuk us longer to come here from Boston than it tuk to come from Dakota there.'

" 'Madam,' said I, 'we came as far away as we knew how!' But she never saw the sarcasm.

"We call them all map-peddlers," continued the colonel. "What is that figure of speech by which the larger part gives the name to the whole?"

"Really," said Polly Ingham, "that was not our name for them. It was dear Mrs. Crapsten's. What awful times they used to have there, before that audacious Karl Whitaker invented the island!"

“Invented an island?”

“Well, if you must be accurate, he invented the use of an island. And Mr. Crapsten, good fellow, chuckles over the story to this day.

“They do say that Karl’s invention netted him five or six million dollars. But, on the Narragansett shore, we care nothing for such trifles. All we want is leisure.”

“As Mr. Emerson says, ‘A dry roof over your heads, so that you may have a little conversation.’”

“Precisely so,” said Colonel Ingham; “better is a dropped egg, under a henlock roof with good society, than a *pâté de fois gras* with a map-peddler or the headmaster of a Southern school for the aristocracy.”

“And pray,” persisted Mrs. Menet, “how did the Crapstens rid themselves of these gentry?”

Her husband laughed. “Minna thinks she may get a leaf for my book. But we have no islands in Arizona. Will the Farallones answer?”

“Do you really not know about Crapsten’s magnificent success? Why, it was all published in *Harper’s*, long ago. Karl Whitaker and Miss Augusta wrote it out between them.”

And, with this introduction, after lunch, as we sat all wrapped to our chins in rugs on the southern piazza, Clara Ingham began to read aloud the story of

THE HAPPY ISLAND.

CHAPTER I.

Kling! ling-a-ling!

“How that door-bell keeps at it!” said jolly Mrs. Crapsten to her pretty daughter Isabel.

"I should think," said Isabel, "that it had rung twenty times since we came up to work."

But both of them were interested in the new mountain dress which they were making, and for the moment neither of them gave another thought to what was passing below. Mrs. Crapsten adjusted the white trimming on the navy blue, Isabel assented or dissented, and both plied needles and scissors for a few minutes longer.

Kling! ling-a-ling! again. And this time Isabel looked out from the window. "Why, poor papa is having a terrible siege, while we are so quietly at work here. Both Taber's boys are here; that dumb man from the crossing is here with his carryall; there are two horses tied at the outside of the stable; and John M'Ginniss does not disguise his rage as he takes this last team across to the barn."

"Can your father have called a Board meeting here, and I forgotten it?" said Mrs. Crapsten, rather anxiously. And she came to the window herself.

"I think not," said Isabel. "I guess they are map-peddlers." The girl said this without a ray of humor. "Map-peddlers" had long been the generic term in that family for that immense class of people who, in the present form of our civilization, come in upon you, with no claim whatever, to grind their own axes or advance their own interests, without the least regard to your convenience or to any of your rights.

"I will see," said her mother, anxiously still. And she sent a girl into Mr. Crapsten's study with this note:

"Shall I make lunch ready for these gentlemen?"

But the note came back with a short "No."

Then Mrs. Crapsten knew that they were all map-peddlers.

If this were a drama, the play would open by showing Mr. Crapsten's study, with all these people in it. But it is quite impossible to describe it even in a long chapter, though from the worst seat in a theatre all could have seen in an instant.

Poor Mr. Crapsten was standing, pale, tired, and confused. His desk and papers showed that he had been writing when the invasion began. Around the room, occupying every chair, were strong-minded women and weak-minded men, glaring angrily at the person with whom Mr. Crapsten was talking, or occasionally looking round with pity and contempt upon those who sat opposite to them. On one side the room, in a separate group, the secretary of a temperance society which believed in prohibition was abusing to their faces the treasurer of a temperance society which did not believe in it and the grand worthy chaplain of the Sons of Temperance. These gentlemen, indeed, did not agree on many points, but, in different vehicles, they had all come, at the same hour, to ask for Mr. Crapsten's money. On the other side of the room the agent of a life-insurance company which did not have the Tontine principle was civilly telling the agent of a society which did that he and his directors ought all to be sent to the penitentiary. In the background (c. of the play-book) the lady president of the Society for the Protection of Little Ones was saying stinging things to the actuary of the Association for Preventing Cruelty to Children. All this was, so to speak, the by-play, while Mr. Crapsten, tired and pale, explained to Mr. Job Jobson that he could not sign the petition on the Rights of Workingmen, because, if he signed it, he should have to go to the committee which heard the petition, to plead for it, and that he had not three days to give to that object.

"Pardon me," said Mr. Jobson; "to what object more important can you give three days?"

"Do you propose to be present yourself at the hearing?" said poor Mr. Crapsten.

"I? No, sir. I shall be occupied in more important duties. I shall be creating a healthy public opinion."

"So shall I," said Mr. Crapsten; and he turned and bowed civilly to Mrs. Miriam Heartsease Pennybacker.

"I beg your pardon," said Dr. Heebe, the chaplain, "but I came before the lady."

"Yes," said poor Crapsten, "and I think she came after you. Will you go on, madam?"

"I am sure I am very sorry to take up your time. I know how much occupied you must be. But every one, dear Mr. Crapsten—every one tells me that if I can only interest you—"

(*Enter, R. H. L. E., Mr. and Mrs. WHITE FEATHER. Dumb-show. He presents a card. Mrs. WHITE FEATHER courtesies. Mr. CRAPSTEN shows chairs. Mrs. PENNYBACKER resumes.*)

"I do not know where I was. Oh, yes, I was saying, my dear sir, what every one tells me, that if I can only interest you in the cause of childhood—the sacred cause of childhood, my dear Dr. Wilmot—"

"My name is Crapsten."

"I beg pardon! Oh, name—yes, what? My dear Dr. Crapsten, every one says to me that if I can only interest you in childhood—in the sacred cause of childhood—I am so sorry to occupy your time."

"How many children have you?" said poor Mr. Crapsten, meaning to be kind.

"I? Children? Sir, I said nothing of children. It is the cause of childhood—the sacred cause of childhood."

"But, madam, I have seven children, and I am—"
(Here the door opens, and Mrs. CRAPSTEN enters, gloved, booted, pelisséd, hatted, and all but veiled for a drive. Enter with her ISABEL with her father's coat and hat, and the maid JACYNTH with his overshoes.)

Mrs. Crapsten. "Indeed, George, you are late already. The Board will need you for a quorum. *(Turns to the company.)* You must excuse my husband, ladies and gentlemen; the Board meets at two, and it is now twelve and three quarters. *(To Mr. CRAPSTEN.)* The horses are at the door, my dear—at the side door. *(To the map-peddlers.)* You will find refreshment in the dining-room. *(To JACYNTH.)* Show the ladies the dining-room; the gentlemen will follow."
(Exit in triumph with ISABEL and Mr. CRAPSTEN, L. H. L. E. Tableau of JACYNTH and disappointed map-peddlers.)

CURTAIN.

CHAPTER II.

You see, Mr. Crapsten was a simple, pure-minded, unselfish gentleman of large wealth, and as large public spirit. The invasions of such people as have been described had long since driven him from his palace in Providence to his country house in the Narragansett country. This was what he gained by the departure. Still, none of this imbroglio could have happened but that Ellen M'Grath had been married the week before.

Ellen M'Grath was a pretty girl, from the north of Ireland, who had been in Mrs. Crapsten's service since she "came over," fifteen years old. She had learned to know a "map-peddler" as far as she could see him. She knew by a certain inborn *coup d'œil*, like any other

great general's, whether he had accident policies, or life policies, or fire and marine policies. She knew if he carried subscriptions for cyclopædias or "galleries of beauty." She knew a lightning-rod man from the president of an orphan asylum for negroes. And she would never have admitted one of this crew in her master's "study hours." But Ellen M'Grath had been married. She had married Perry Mitchell, as handy a carpenter and as tender a gardener as ever drew a seine for shad, or beat to windward in a south-easter off Block Island. Perry Mitchell would have said of himself that he was "awful handy about most chores ;" but, for myself, I think he never showed himself so sensible as when he persuaded pretty Ellen M'Grath to marry him.

Still, as you see, what was joy to him was death to poor Mr. Crapsten. This Nora—Ellen's cousin, who had been imported specially from the neighborhood of Mullingar to take her place—was a good, neat girl, but she did not know the treasurer of the D. E. F. H. M. when she saw him. Nor could she tell a matron of a Retreat from a lady patroness of Cuban exiles.

When Mr. and Mrs. Crapsten and Isabel returned from their drive to the Board meeting—which was simply a gathering of his own family, without guests, around his own dinner-table—the "proctors" were all gone. "Proctors" * is the name given to map-peddlers in the statutes of Edward VI. and Elizabeth, by which statutes their occupations were made felony, being, in fact, the stealing of the time of others with a view to using it for their own behoof. Mrs. Crapsten knew they would be gone. The express train then passed East Greenwich at 3.11, and she knew they would not

* *Proctor*. A manager of another man's affairs.—*Dr. Johnson*.

wait for the accommodation. No ; they would charge their respective treasurers for "travelling expenses," and would prefer to sleep at home.

Not one word was said either in the drive or at dinner about the invasion. The subject was too sore. But after Mr. Crapsten had finished his soup, and had carved the mutton, his watchful wife led him to talk about his "report"—how much was finished, and how much remained to do. Then she led the way carefully, and at last made it sure that Isabel would like to go over to Newport for ten days. Then she made it clear that Isabel could not go unless he went. Then she suggested that he could take the "report" over to Newport and finish it with Isabel—Isabel could copy and calculate for him. She only wanted a quiet time in Newport while Dr. Harris was seeing to her teeth, and she could not go to him for more than half an hour each day. Then, at Newport there would be no interruptions. And at Newport he could have the Redwood Library.

The plan was a good plan. More than this, it was Mrs. Crapsten's plan, and she meant to have her way. Most of all, she had it. And the next morning Mr. Crapsten and Isabel drove over to the Pier, and took the Florence for Newport. Two large boxes carried the statistics and documents needed for the "Report on the Organization of Emigration."

Thus was an excellent, industrious, unselfish man, who gave every instant of his life and every penny of his income to the poor, to his country, and the service of his God, driven from the comforts and conveniences of his own house to such as he might hire in a Newport boarding-house, in order that he might escape the interruption of those persons who were not content with

his serving God in his own way, but wished to persuade him to serve in theirs.

Before his back was turned Mrs. Crapsten had telegraphed to her cousin Karl Whitaker ; and Mr. Crapsten had not been gone an hour before Karl reported to Mrs. Crapsten for duty. He had just resigned his post on the Coast Survey. He loved Mrs. Crapsten as he loved his life, and he would do anything to serve her. Meanwhile, Mrs. Crapsten had also sent for Ellen Mitchell, the bride, and had held high conelave with her. Her honeymoon was so far advanced that in this philanthropic family it was time that she also should begin to serve the world.

Karl Whitaker lent himself, day and night, to his cousin's plans. Nor had any man ever a better "first luff" than Perry Mitchell proved to be. That was, indeed, just what Perry Mitchell was fit for. Before Mr. Crapsten returned, even, the pretty porter's lodge, where the long avenue turns in from the Kingston road, just where Gershom Tucker's house used to stand, had been refitted for Mitchell and his wife to live in. They were established there. And Ellen would have promised on the book, but it was not needed, that never a proctor of them all should pass without her knowledge. The old ice-road, which leads back from the house by the pond a quarter of a mile, to the Riddell place, was cleaned out, gravelled, and with its grass cut and its shrubs trimmed, it made a very pretty "avenue." The Riddell house had a new coat of paint ; had red baskets with hanging plants, fresh from Newport, hanging on the piazza ; had a flag flying from the cupola ; and represented admirably well, to all wayfarers who might come so far, Mr. Crapsten's own manor-house. In the

large parlor of the Riddell house—with rattan chairs galore, with two large sofas, with four Turkish rugs on the Japanese matting—presided Karl Whitaker. He represented Mr. Crapsten.

The trap was set. Who should be the first buzzing blue-bottle who should come in ?

CHAPTER III.

There was not long to wait. Karl was but half through with his cigarette, as he lay in the hammock the morning after he had taken possession, when the rattle of wheels startled him. He threw the end away, and was at his desk when Oliver Garner (a cross between Narragansett and Congo he, whom Karl had retained as his familiar) brought in the card of

Augustus E. J. Southgate, M.D.

R. E. Institute of Medicine.

Dr. Southgate was at once admitted.

Karl explained that Mr. Crapsten was away for the day, but would be very sorry to miss Dr. Southgate, whose name was so well known to him. Dr. Southgate bridled, and put his thumbs in the sleeves of his waistcoat, and stood with his back to the empty fireplace, and explained that he was about to deliver a course of lectures with a manikin, and a stereoscope, and some wax models, and that he would be glad to have Mr. Crapsten head his "bespeak," and at the same time give him the names of the neighbors who would probably take tickets. Karl listened courteously and attentively. When the doctor had delivered his whole speech, Karl, observant of the cue, took his turn.

Karl. "It is very curious, my dear doctor, that you should call now. Here is a letter for you, which I directed even after you were in the house. You have saved me a postage-stamp." The amazed doctor opened it to read the following lines :

"MY DEAR SIR : Could you favor me with an interview at your convenience ? I wish to see you on some business of Mr. Crapsten's.

"Respectfully yours,

"KARL WHITAKER.

"LITTLE CRASTIS, May 11, 1877."

Karl did not say, and the doctor did not know, that the envelope box on the table held ninety-nine copies of this note ready to be addressed to any proctors as their cards were brought in.

The pink envelopes in the pink box were similar, but they were ready to address to women. As a card was brought in to Karl, he had simply to address his letter, and all was ready for the visitor.

To Dr. Southgate he said : "What we wanted to propose, doctor, was this : We have an establishment for the higher education of boys and girls at Fernando Key, off Florida. I have—no, Mr. Crapsten has with him—a letter, which I cannot show you, therefore. But no matter. Just what we want is a professor of physiology, who would not be unwilling to act as physician, and perhaps to assist in the singing in the chapel on Sundays. What his full duties would be I cannot tell. In fact, doctor, if you took the place, you would make it very much for yourself. Of course you would not think of accepting till you had seen the place. But what I should propose would be that you should take a few weeks and go down and see it."

Dr. Southgate was surprised, and tried to conceal his surprise. He was delighted, and tried to conceal his delight. With the ordinary delusion of an ignorant and under-bred man, he tried to make Whitaker think he was constantly receiving such proposals. With the inexperience of a man who had never served mankind, and had never been asked to serve it, he was amazed at the simplicity by which a sincere offer was made. Of course he grasped at it, though he pretended not to. To be cared for for three months was more than his fondest dream an hour before. When should he go?

Karl. "To say truth, doctor, we send off a schooner with some of the Institute to-morrow from the Pier. Could you not spend the night with us here, and sail from the Pier to-morrow?"

Doctor. Mumble, mumble, mumble—"my baggage and"—mumble, mumble, mumble—"my classes—"

Karl. "We have a little stock of clothing of assorted sizes, from Fenno's, for the colony. Suppose I fit you with a pea-jacket and appurtenances for the voyage? And when you come back—eh? you see?"

Doctor. Mumble, mumble, mumble—"institute"—mumble, mumble—"vacation"—mumble—"term-time. My size is forty-five, outside measure"—mumble, mumble, mumble.

At the end of which Karl stepped to the door, paid Taber's boy, and sent him back to the station. And the doctor stayed.

Before this was settled Mrs. Claudia Jane Springer—sister of the founder and principal of the Young Ladies' Institute at Elmer, Mississippi—entered. Had called to ask Mr. Crapsten to head her subscription list, and preside at a public meeting on the subject of Southern education and the closing of the Bloody Gulf.

Karl (to Mrs. SPRINGER). "It is very curious, madam, that you should call now. Your name is hardly dry on this note, which I wrote this morning. Only I had not your address. I mislaid the Journal of last Wednesday." (Mrs. SPRINGER *opens the note, fluttered and with interest.*)

Karl. "You need not read it, madam. The truth is, what we want—what Mr. Crapsten wants, I mean—is to establish an institute of instruction among these people—virtuous but benighted, dear Mrs. Springer—on the coast of Florida. Mr. Crapsten has a right in an island there, called Fernando Key; and if you, madam, or some lady of your reputation and force of character," etc., etc., etc.

Mrs. Springer. "My engagements with my sisters"—mumble, mumble, mumble, etc., etc., etc.

Karl. "I have thought of all that; but you know—Of course we are overrun with applicants. Just look at that pile of letters, and this boxful, not yet filed" (sardonic smile). "In a word, dear Mrs. Springer, it is not every day that we could find a lady of your intelligence, of your culture, of your training to business, and, let me say, as between friends, of your presence. If Mr. Crapsten insists on anything, it is that the leaders in this enterprise should be ladies who were born ladies, and gentlemen of good family. Might I introduce you to Professor Southgate, who is to take the Professorship of Physiology in the institute, and will lunch with us, while I see the people who are waiting?"

(*Stage direction. This scene is varied by the frequent entrance of OLIVER GARNER, L. H. L. E., with silver salver and cards. Door-bell passim. Exit Mrs. SPRINGER, R. H. U. E. Enter FRED BOREMAN, L. H. L. E.*)

Fred Boreman (looking round). "Mr. Crapsten? I expected to see Mr. Crapsten—my classmate Crapsten."

Karl (rises to meet him). "Mr. Crapsten is in Newport to-day on business. But he will be sorry to miss you, Mr. Boreman. I have just addressed this note to you."

Fred Boreman (opens note and reads). "How fortunate! He asks me to call. A pity he is away. (*Aside.*) The first man who ever asked me. (*Aloud.*) We are old friends—near friends. Lived in the same entry in Hollis. I coached him in his Greek and chemistry, you know."

Karl. "Indeed, he often speaks of you. As he is not here, I can tell you what he wants, and you can tell me if you can serve him. The truth is, what we want—what Mr. Crapsten wants, I mean—is some man of college education—a man of the world, too—who can represent him at Fernando Key, an island he has bought off the coast of Florida. He cannot go there himself. But he wants some one—well, to see to the orange-trees, to give directions as to the new buildings, and, in short, to live there till he comes. I take some credit that it occurred to me that you would do this thing admirably well. Now, if your engagements would permit—"

Boreman (aside). "I wish I knew what they were. (*Aloud.*) Let me look at my memoranda. The 15th—no, that Cross will take for me; 9th to 15th of August I must be at Fortescue's—"

Karl. "But Mr. Crapsten would write to Fortescue. In truth, we want you to start to-morrow. A lot of people go to-morrow in Crapsten's own schooner, and we want—I do not say a superintendent, but a man of the world—you understand me? well!—to keep them good-natured, and make things seem home-like, you know.

Let me introduce you to Professor Southgate here. You will stay and lunch, at least. Southgate understands it better than I do." (*Rings, and bids OLIVER GARNER send back to the station Mrs. SPRINGER's "team" and Mr. BOREMAN's.*)

(*Exit BOREMAN, R. H. U. E. At the same moment (dumb-show of cards as before) OLIVER GARNER admits Dr. DIMITRY KOULAGOFF, L. H. L. E. Dr. KOULAGOFF bows. Looks uneasily for a place for his hat.*)

Karl (rises courteously). "Let me take your hat, doctor. Excuse me while you read this note, which, by Mr. Crapsten's direction, I addressed to you only to-day."

(*Same dumb-show as before. After the doctor has looked at the note—*)

Karl. "The truth is, my dear doctor—"

Dr. Koulagoff. "Mais, monsieur, je n'entends pas l'Anglais."

Karl. "Ah, pardon. Ni moi, le Bulgare. Mais, s'il vous plaît, causerons en Français. Ah! bien! Vraiment, M. le Docteur." (*And then, as before, with same dumb-show, explains that at Fernando Key there will be needed some one to introduce the system of vine-growing from Eastern Europe, and, preparatory to that, to correspond with the princes of Bulgaria in reference to the colonization, etc., etc. All this rapidly and with gesture, ending by an introduction to Professor SOUTHGATE—same dumb-show as before—and entrance of Mrs. WILDERSPIN, L. H. L. E.*)

Mrs. Wilderspin. "I understood you kept a sort of intelligence office here."

Karl (grimly). "Madam, that is just what we do. This morning we have offered so much that we have very little left."

Mrs. Wilderspin (not listening). "I am sure I am sorry to take up your time, but I wanted to find occupation."

Karl (civilly). "Yes? and in what line?—a teacher?"

Mrs. W. "No, I am too old for that."

Karl. "Housekeeper, perhaps; large establishment, seven servants; housekeeper has a separate table."

Mrs. W. "No. I have bad headaches. I cannot rise before twelve in the morning."

Karl. "Companion to a rich lady in Newport, possibly. Salary \$500. Duties, to drive between three and five in the afternoon, and to attend parties in the evening."

Mrs. W. "No. I hate to ride."

Karl (with sympathy). "What then?"

Mrs. W. "If you knew of an empty house, furnished, you know, and with the fuel, I think I and my husband could live in it while the owner, you know, went to Europe."

Karl. "Just the thing; we have it exactly. In truth, my dear madam, Mr. Crapsten—I am not Mr. Crapsten—wants in his home at Fernando Key, while he is at the North, a gentleman and lady of refinement. You understand me, I am sure (*etc., etc., etc., as before*). Could you talk with Professor Southgate and Mrs. Springer?—they understand it perfectly." (*Same dumb-show as before.*)

(*Exit Mrs. WILDERSPIN, R. H. U. E. Enter OLIVER GARNER, L. H. L. E., and introduces Rev. JOHN CORBAN.*)

And so on, and so on, through that day and the next. In truth, the Curlew did not come round from Boston till Friday. On Friday she sailed, with twenty-four passengers, for Fernando Key.

"The happiest thing in the world," said Karl to his

cousin, "that I took the Key off Fotheringay's hands. I only thought of it as a good place for shooting. But I would give sixpence to see old Webber when these people arrive. I have telegraphed to Halfenstein at St. Augustine, and he will have at least six days' notice. There is enough to eat, any way."

And so every third or fourth day through the summer these mad conspirators sent off to old Webber twenty or thirty of these reformers. Not one ever declined Karl's offer. In truth, it opened a better life to each of them than he was leading, or she. And as Karl said, whenever his cousin's heart failed her, "Let them reform each other. When I have a dull carving-knife," said he, "I always take another, and give them both new edges by rubbing blade against blade."

And so it proved at the Key.

CHAPTER IV.

Old Webber, at Fernando Key, had an easier time than seemed probable, when the Curlew arrived and her several successors.

When these two crazy madcaps, Karl and his cousin, started this enterprise, Karl had still so much method in his madness that he telegraphed to an old "pal" of his, at St. Augustine, quite full instructions. Interpreting these instructions very broadly, Halfenstein bought two of Skillings's ready-made school-houses, and two churches, which he found waiting purchasers. He chartered a little steamer, took a deck-load of Southern timber, and hired twenty Minorcans and four stout negroes. With this assorted cargo he came in on old Webber at the Key one fine May morning, ten days before the Curlew appeared.

The consequence was that when that vessel brought in her living cargo, after a slow but not disagreeable passage, quite a little village stood empty awaiting them, and they passed from the discomforts of a packet schooner to the luxuries of sweet soft air, bananas and oranges on the trees, roast pig, fried chickens, omelets of seven patterns, yams, mangoes, apples of paradise, and peas of Elysium, served in two rival refectories—which had no such Popish names—under the varied cuisines of Mammy Chloe and Uncle Stephen. Of mattresses and other bedding Karl Whitaker had put enough on the Curlew for a hundred philanthropists.

To a person of systematic mind or training it would seem that the new-comers would be disturbed when they found so little other preparation than this which was thus made for physical wants. But that happened which neither Karl nor Mrs. Crapsten had foreseen. The philanthropists were not people of systematic mind or training. To find that neither “institute” had any scholars did not seem strange to them. They were, indeed, used to institutes on paper. To have nothing to do from Monday morning till Saturday night was neither new to them nor disagreeable. To wait, as they did, by Halfenstein’s directions, for fuller arrangements when “the Board” should have its quarterly meeting, was most natural of all. All of them were used to waiting for something to turn up. Halfenstein had had the wit to arrange two boarding-houses, with the knowledge that a slight rivalry would improve the fare, and that so much separation into two parties would make the new establishment more lively. Even Stamboul, at its worst government, enjoyed the partisanship of the “greens” and the “blues.” And Halfenstein said afterward that his anxieties were all over when he saw the William Tell

come into the wind, so that he knew she was going to run for his pier. She was the second packet. She sailed four days after the Curlew, but arrived only two days after. From the moment when the Curlew people could patronize the William Tell people, he said social order was established. Caste or class had come into society, and from that time all was well. Two or three times a week a packet would arrive. Always a load of philanthropists, "proctors," or other map-peddlers. Always they landed weary of a voyage, hungry, and tired. Always the different orders of the little state welcomed them with a lively condescension. Gradually they fell into the little coteries of the "red school-house" and "the new school-house," the "hill church" and the "shore church." Before long they knew the rights and the wrongs of the Gwendolen passage, of the row on board the Neptune's Bride, of Dr. Southgate's quarrel with Professor Drisko, and of William Wildasin's scandalous flirtation with Mrs. Belle Blackburn. The regular organization of the two institutes still waited directions from their Boards. And it proved, according to Halfenstein, who had letters from Karl by every packet, that each Board had failed in a quorum at its quarterly meeting. Strangely enough, none of the philanthropists or other proctors ever received any letters. The square truth, in honest English, was that no human being in the world ever had missed one of them, or knew that they were gone, excepting a few boarding-house keepers, who were glad to see the last of them. Halfenstein, however, put it in a much more elegant way. He was forever receiving great government envelopes from the Post-Office Department, and abusing the red tape of government, which would not give them an office. But for newspapers they did not lack; he kept old Michael,

with two mulatto boys, cruising in a fruit boat in the channels, and never vessel passed from London, from New York, or New Orleans, but gladly exchanged the "latest dates" for the freshest oranges and bananas. For books, Karl had a box of novels sent down by every packet, and the philanthropists seemed to read nothing else. The insurance men generally stuck to the newspapers.

The Curlew, the William Tell, the Web-Foot, the Gwendolen, the Roycroft, the Sea-Gull, the Neptun's Bride, the Olivia Emmons, eventually made a regular line between the Pier and the Key. They brought many passengers, but never took away one. Karl was careful about this. The skippers were instructed to say that they had to go to the Dry Tortugas and the Wet Bahamas, and other parts unknown; and as soon as they had landed their deck loads, off they went. Indeed, they went in the middle of the night always, with never a chance for a stowaway. But, to say truth, as long as I was on the island (I was at that time the collecting agent for the S. P. O. H. C.*) I never saw or heard of any one who wanted to leave. We were all awaiting the quarterly meeting of our respective "Boards," and wanted to know how our rank was to be determined. Now

"Boards are made of wood; they are long and narrow,"

as it says, or should say, in the copy-book.

As the summer passed, and the autumn came on, our occupation took more the form of established society.

* "The Society for Providing Occupation for the Higher Classes."

The insurance men of our side, as Mammy Chloe's boarders were called, would take a chance, after their siesta, to walk over to the other village, and insure the lives of the hands who were at work there in putting up new houses, and of the philanthropists who lived there. Meanwhile their insurance men came over and insured us and our workmen. None of us had any money. But we soon invented a system of credits. We gave our notes payable in ninety-nine years. Then once a week, every Monday evening, there was a meeting in the "red school-house," which partook of the character of a "clearing-house." These notes were "cleared" against each other, and the balances only were entered in a big book, which we called "Doomsday-Book." This simple plan made business very active. The lightning-rod men made enormous contracts for rods—simply subject to the approval of the "Boards." The rival school agents for "Fortescue's Readers" and "Tyrwhitt's Reading-Books," and the men who introduced "Ptolemy's School Geography" and the "Periplus Series of Physical Geography," were very fortunate in their contracts with the professors. Occasionally a professor would deliver a lecture. But generally the school-houses proved more useful for private theatricals and for tableaux. We had a charming series of tableaux, organized by me, for the benefit of the Society for Providing O. F. H. C. We distributed the tickets for sale in the two boarding-houses, and gave a free ticket to every one who sold ten. The house was full, and the proceeds, on paper, were very large.

Our summer and autumn passed, therefore, both intelligently and agreeably. Before it ripened into that pleasant Florida winter, we had a population of near one thousand philanthropists. But the original division of

two villages still held, and Aunt Chloe's people and Uncle Stephen's people were in some sort two communities. As it happened, each had a church, and each an institute. Of course there were in each village a dozen boarding-houses in place of the primeval two. Still, the impression held and holds that Uncle Stephen had secrets in the frying of clams unknown to Mammy Chloe, and that he permitted the use of these secrets, by certain royalties, in all the Hill cookery, while the Shore knew nothing of them. However this may be, it is certain that the gumbo soup of the Shore was unmatched and unmatchable by anything furnished on the Hill.

CHAPTER V.

As the blushing October of lovely Narragansett blushed its rosiest before November ravaged the whole scene, Isabel and her father took a charming scamper on horseback one day over the hills and far away. As they came back to the Kingston Road, Mr. Crapsten threw himself from his horse, took down the top rail of a bit of fence, and cried to Isabel :

“ Now show me how well you can leap those bars.”

The girl did it without hesitation. Her father did the same, and led her into the still glades of the forest.

Oh, how still !

“ Dear child,” he said, reverently indeed, “ I will show you things hidden from the foundation of the world.”

And he did so.

He led the way where the horses' feet sank deep in greenish-gray lichen, which had grown on the graves of other lichens, which were the monuments of others which were growing in the days of Canonchet. There

was not soil enough for anything but this humble greenish-grayish-blue, and the craunch of the horses' feet had a weird, dry sound which seemed to be an echo from another century. There came over Isabel the feeling that no human being had ever stood there before.

"Dear papa, when did you find this solitude?"

"Only yesterday. But I have made many such discoveries this summer. When mamma does not ride with me, I am very adventurous."

Isabel (a little frightened with her own rashness).

"How much time you have had for yourself this summer!"

Mr. Crapsten. "Yes. I am sometimes troubled about it. But do you know, I never had the letters so well in hand, my business never troubled me so little, and really (*with a timid laugh*) I have almost finished the book on the emigration of the Iranian tribes."

They rode happily on, silently, till he began again, a little anxiously:

"We have not had so many of the people you call 'map-peddlers.' Do you know, I am a little frightened. I hope I was not rude that last day before we went to Newport."

Isabel. "Rude, papa! you do not know how to be rude. You could not be rude if you tried. Now do not go and worry about those things."

But Isabel, who was in her mother's secrets, rode home like a guilty thing. When they passed the letter-box where the mail-rider left the Little Crastis mail, the girl slipped off her pony, let him run up to the stable alone, and herself carried up the mail to her father.

"There, papa, it is a dear little mail. I've a letter from Tom, mamma has one from Aunt Kate, and there are only three for you."

And her father said he should have just time to read the letters before dinner.

Dinner seemed particularly jolly that day. The younger boys were in great feather—had caught the biggest pickerel within the memory of man. Mary M'Mahon had surpassed herself in the chowder and clam fritters ; and the Trustum Bay oysters were perfect. As they sat at the dessert, rather more lazily than usual, Mrs. Crapsten said : “ I had a nice letter from Kate ; they will all be here Friday. What was your mail ? ”

Mr. Crapsten. “ Oh, I ought to have told you, for I was really very much pleased. Isabel, go bring the letters.”

And when the girl returned, he handed one to his wife.

“ There, that is from Baring's people. They are well pleased with the Cattaraugus success, and have made on the other side a syndicate. Hope joins, and Caruthers, and even the great Rothschild nibbles. They offer me ten millions for my interest, or I may join with them.”

Mrs. Crapsten. “ And you are pleased ? Did I know about this ? ”

Mr. C. “ I think I told you. It was that time I went to Boston, and left you at the Champernoons' at Hingham.”

Mrs. C. “ I don't remember.”

Mr. C. “ Well, it is a long story ; but we have nothing to do. You know the Cattaraugus and Opelousas all went down again after—after poor George Orcutt went up.”

Mrs. Crapsten nodded, for the subject of George Orcutt was a sad one.

Mr. C. “ Well, it occurred to me one day that all it needed was to make a cut-off or connection between that sharp bend at Wills's, so as to unite us with that poor

weak-kneed Pemaquid and Kittatinny line. They were in the hands of receivers, you know."

Mrs. Crapsten nodded again, though she had no idea what a receiver was.

"*Mr. C.* "Well, I gave orders to buy up the P. and K., and of course I got their stock for nothing, and their bonds for a whistle. I saw Beamish that afternoon—Jack Beamish, George's son—and sent him with his things and a party to Wills's. They got an old charter on the way; he ran his experimental line that week; and the next week Grimes—no, Groves, those New Hampshire people—took the contract. Of course it worked; their road has been running now for near three weeks; the Philadelphia people get their pork a penny cheaper; and if you knew it, that winter butter you ordered of Hastings yesterday will cost you a cent less because of Jack Beamish."

Isabel (admiring). "And all because of you, papa!"

She had never heard her father explain business at such length.

Mr. C. "Yes; well—because of me, I suppose. That is what I am for. Somebody must plan things. But, somehow, for a year or two I have never seemed to have any time to attend to what I wanted to do—until this summer. I said to Isabel that I was afraid something was wrong."

Mrs. C. "And you have really sat here to-day, and talked about pickerel and oysters and clams, when we were ten million dollars richer than we were yesterday?"

Mr. C. "Pourquoi non? I forgot all about the letter. What is the good of the money, unless we can help other people with it? But if you bid me sell to the Barings, why, you can found your Old Ladies' Home, and endow your Medical College for Women."

Isabel. "And you, papa—I know what you want to do ; you can send your colony to the Upper Canadian !"

Mr. C. smiled good-naturedly. "You have found me out, have you ? Well, if I believe in anything, it is in the 'Organization of Emigration.' "

Then *Mrs. Crapsten*, who, as has been seen, is a bold woman, determined on the instant to dare all, and to confess to her husband the whole "Organization of Emigration" which she and her cousin had carried forward.

Mrs. C. "After you have had your nap, I want to take you to drive."

Mr. C. "Gladly. Where to ?"

Mrs. C. "Well, where you do not like to go. I shall take you to the Riddell place."

Mr. C. "As you will. But it is a gloomy old hole. I have not been there this summer."

Mrs. C. "I know you think so, but you do not know how gay and festive Karl and I have made it."

Mr. C. "Yes, Karl brags of it whenever he comes over. Well, anywhere with you."

And he went off to his nap.

"To think," cried *Mrs. Crapsten* to *Isabel*, when they were alone—"to think that a horde of people who say they know more than your father, should be able to keep him for years from helping the world forward in his own way ! Now, in three weeks, that they let him alone, he has made food cheaper for half the world, and is all the more ready to go on and do so much the more."

Mr. Crapsten slept exactly his appointed hour, and then was ready at the carriage ; so was *Isabel* ; so was her mother. He wondered at the improved avenue quite as much as they could have asked. He was delighted with the clumps of rhododendrons, where there

was a little opening ; and when he saw the festive aspect of the old Riddell place, he fairly clapped his hands.

Karl heard the wheels, and came out to welcome them, forewarned by Oliver Garner that these were not of the common kind.

As he handed Mrs. Crapsten from the carriage, she whispered, in a tragic aside, " We must confess all ! "

And they did confess all. At first they had no chance. Karl introduced Mr. Crapsten to Mr. Palfrey and Mr. Chamberlin, his clerks, and to Miss Olive and Miss Augusta, his other trusty aids ; and Mr. Crapsten looked round, rather amazed at the undisguisable air of business which the dismal old Riddell house had assumed.

" Why, Karl, this does not look much like partridge-shooting ! Since when have you been such a man of affairs ? "

The young ladies all blanched white, and then flushed red. But Karl, as easy as if he were on examination before a board which he was snubbing, said, " Oh, it is all my old hobby, the ' Organization of Emigration. ' "

" Organization of Emigration ! " said Mr. Crapsten. " Have you stolen my thunder ? "

Then Karl confessed all. He told the story very briefly, but very well. He gave great praise to Ellen (M'Grath) Mitchell, as was her due. Not once in that hard-worked summer had she mistaken her man or woman, so far as Karl knew.

" No, " said Mr. Crapsten, with a certain sense of relief, " nor so far as I know. Never man or woman has come to the house here to talk organized philanthropy to me this summer. "

" George was saying, " said his wife, " that he had for once attended to his own concerns. "

" And how much has this cost you schemers ? " asked

Mr. Crapsten. And Karl calmly showed the five monthly balance-sheets, and bade Miss Olive bring the day-book and ledger for October.

“On the whole,” he said, “we are doing better than I dared hope. They do not work much, of course. Nobody expected that. But they are modest in their needs. They drink nothing but milk and water, and they provide a good deal of their own food. There, that is the ration for September—\$1.97½ a week, you see. Our roster was then 879 ; but now we have sent, since the 30th, 51, 69, 33, 19 in the Swiftsure, that makes 172 more. We made an excellent thing of it last month with our Southern pine. Halfenstein misread, or somebody miswrote, a dispatch of mine, and they bought in June a great lot of Florida pine, just when I was pouring in Northern pine by deck-loads. All of a sudden last month the market here was cornered, and I have sold all my Florida pine for enough to meet all my lumber bills. Since I put the propellers on we have done a good thing in fruit. We send them on a round trip, and they come home by the islands.”

Mr. Crapsten was interested by the figures, understood the position in a moment, asked questions, and made suggestions.

“At \$52 apiece, your average of 500 has cost you \$26,000 for their board.”

“Yes, sir ; but what with our fresh-fish sales here, the oyster account, the profits on the pine business, and the fruit balance—here is my September balance—we brought down the total expense to \$13,692.11. Besides, we have some small collections to make.”

Mr. Crapsten turned with admiration to his wife. “Now I know why you sold the Vienna necklace, and your 5-20 bonds.”

Mrs. C. "How did you know it?"

Mr. C. "As it happened, I bought the necklace. Your man in New York had heard me asking for something of the kind, and I found it waiting my inspection at the office the other day. As for the bonds, they were registered, you know; and it so happened that in the last lump I bought, these of yours came round to me. But then I never meant to be poking into your secrets."

Isabel. "And will you forgive the conspirators, papa?"
(*She flings herself in burlesque upon the ground.*)

Mr. C. "Forgive! It is I who am to ask as a favor that I may sit at your feet and study the 'Organization of Emigration.'"

Mr. and Mrs. C.

ISABEL.

KARL.

Mr. P.

Miss OLIVE.

Miss AUGUSTA.

Mr. C.

CURTAIN.

CHAPTER III.

AT chapter three of the "Story of the Island" everybody had assented to my proposal that we should move into the gray parlor. There the colonel rang for a student's lamp, and by its light he finished the story of Karl Whitaker's audacity.

"A pity that we have not the Crapstens here!" said the colonel. "Nice people; not spoiled by their money. If the weather serves, we will take you round there, Mrs. Menet, some morning. They are all in Rome this winter. But the houses are there still, and you will understand the story better when you see how cleverly Karl Whitaker laid his baits for the perch and flat-heads who sailed so innocently to the happy island."

And then, as we sat in the darkness—the one lamp shaded by a little screen—it happened, not unnaturally, that we fell to talking about story-telling, its objects, and its methods.

They read aloud inveterately at the colonel's. All this summer, there had been six hours of every day when any loafer of the neighborhood, who chose to drift up there, might sit on the piazza and hear Howells, or James, or Besant, or the new man, Fred Anstey; or perhaps Mrs. Oliphant, or Daudet, or maybe a comedy of Scribe's. Lately one and another had been reading Trollope's theory of novel-writing, and Besant's, and James's—discussing the question, what is it all for?

"Is it that the reader may kill time?"

“Is it that the author may reform the world, or save the reader’s soul?”

“Is it that the author may show how well he can do it, as a skilful painter will copy for you a dry herring on a board?”

To these three questions—which represent the three theories—we tried to make the colonel give his answer. He is an inveterate story-teller; nor does he care whether a ruthless editor limit him to one hundred and fifty words, or whether the contractor for some new “series” propose to him that the story shall be of one hundred thousand—or perhaps two.

“It is much the same thing,” he says. “When I was on the *Argus*—in the days when newspapers had editors, and did not run themselves, as they are supposed to do now—the chief would leave his instructions for us reporters.

“On my desk I would find a bit of yellow paper, which would say, ‘Centennial at Bromwich—three words’—or it would say, ‘Centennial at Bromwich, verbatim.’ And I took my train, and I went to Bromwich. We were proud in our responsibility. The three words were well chosen, and they told the whole.

“The droll thing about your stories is,” said the colonel, dreaming as he spoke, “that there seems to be no way in which you can tell the public where the real passes into the ideal.

“Ah me! when I was a lad, that charming Mrs. Dickinson, in President’s Square, had a great party to show some marvellous china her husband had just imported for her from Canton.

“I was talking to a sweet, pretty girl from Albany—she has twenty charming granddaughters to-day—and I

took one of the platters which had a lot of Chinese writing on it, and invented a rigmarole translation.

“To my horror, the circle was silent, and twenty senators’ and nineteen ambassadors’ wives listened eagerly.

“I blushed, and made it more and more absurd, hoping that some one person might know that China was not the District of Columbia, nor the East the West.

“No! All that came was a sigh from Madam Brenner, ‘What an extraordinary people the Chinese are!’

“And poor I, to save any reputation I had left for veracity, had to say, ‘Indeed, Madam Brenner, I had explained to Miss Cora that I cannot read a word of Chinese, and I am making it up as I go along.’

“Then they all turned their backs on me, and said, ‘What a liar that Ingham is!’”

I said at this, that every public speaker knew that the dullest person in an audience sets the key-note of the intelligence of that audience. If Hod Soft-head is there, and you know it, to Hod Soft-head you address yourself.

Carter said he thought that nobody listened much to anything. “They are all thinking what they will say next.”

I said I had had a man tell me that all he remembered of my sermon was my spirited account of my father driving an express engine from Worcester to Boston. Now, my father never drove an engine in his life, and I never said he did; nor did I ever describe anybody’s driving an engine in any sermon. “You must remember,” said I, “that people do not like to confess ignorance. I will tell you a story about that—”

But at this moment I saw Mrs. Ingham turning to her daughter Bertha.

"Perhaps I had better wait till we have had tea," I said. "The story will take a good while ; but we have all the evening."

Mrs. Ingham said we could have tea at once. She rang and ordered lights—tea was served as we sat—and I said I should have to preface my short story by reading them the story of Cromwell's Statue.

To begin with, I said, I should like to say that this story is not even founded on fact. It is what is called a work of the imagination. The New York *Observer* calls such work "lying." But, really, there is high authority for it, not to say, sacred authority.

Knowing the passion of the average world for fact, I fortified this story—even though it were printed in the *Story-Teller*—with a little preface to say, "*This is not true.*"

That is, I put it all in the mouth of Joel Scroop, a purely imaginary person.

Then I read the story of

CROMWELL'S STATUE.

I wish you would not make me responsible for the story. It is no story of mine. It is Joel Scroop who tells the story, as they are all sitting in that funny hotel at Brieg—waiting for a fine day, that they may go over the Simplon. It is raining like fury—so that they cannot walk out, nor, indeed, see twenty feet from the house. They are all sitting, lazily, at the breakfast-tables—as they have been for an hour and a half—one dropping in after another, and fresh relays appearing of coffee, of honey, of bread, and of trout. "Frizz-izz-izz-izz," said Montgomery Myers to the pretty waiting-girl, "*pas* bubble-bubble-bubble-bubble." By which lan-

guage he meant that the trout were to be fried and not boiled. And I need not say that she understood him.

They had all come down, in various calèches and voitures, boots and shoes, from the glacier of the Rhone. And it was some discussion on the cohesion of ice under pressure, as to its capacity to bear great weights, which made George grin and exchange glances with Joel. Then Mrs. Mason took it up and asked what he meant, and George grinned again, and said Joel would tell the story better than he would. And Mrs. Mason told Joel to tell it. And he said it would take an hour. And she said so much the better. "Go ahead," said Montgomery. "Pray go on," said Mrs. Beard. And Joel went on.

JOEL'S STORY.

If anybody knows how much weight four blocks of ice will bear, George does, and I.

You see, it all began one day in Westminster Hall. We had gone in, with tickets from the Legation, to hear a debate in the House of Commons, and George stopped to see the statues. Their first plan was to set the kings of England and the queens there, I suppose. For Mary the Good is there. I mean the one who dethroned her father—the Mary Stuart who is not Marie Stuart. She stands at one end, and her husband at the other. Next her is James I. Then comes Charles I., not realistic, for he had his head on. Then came Charles II. and James II. Next to him came William III., Mary's husband. But no Cromwell. For reasons unknown the series stopped there. I suppose they gave Thackeray the contract for Queen Anne and the four Georges, and that he died before they were finished.

Observe, I say there was *then* no Cromwell. Some-

body said his bust was to be somewhere among the "generals;" but because he was only sovereign of England, and not king, they would not put him among their kings and queens.

Daniel was with us—Dan Dielmann, you know. He said they were afraid to trust Cromwell in the night with such a pack of Stuarts. As it was they had to have William and Mary flank them to keep them well in hand.

Fitz said that there would not have been any "Rule Britannia," or "Britons Rule the Waves," if there had not been any Oliver Cromwell; and that Westminster Hall was not perfect without some memento of the greatest thing that was ever done in it; and, as we went up-stairs to the gallery of the House, I heard Donald Everard—he is a regular old Scotch Covenanter—muttering something about "garring kings ken that they had a crik in their necks."

That was all that happened then.

. . . But in the fall—it was after I had my studio in "The Avenue," you know, where those queer old trees are, on the Fulham Road, just in the edge of Brompton and Chelsea—we were sitting in the dark, one afternoon—Mrs. Pride had been sitting to me till the light failed—Monty there started the whole thing. I would make him tell you what he said, but he would fall to preaching. Shortly, it was this: that it was a shame—the worst kind of shame—that there was no statue of Cromwell there. That if England had not pluck or gratitude enough to put it there, New England had. Cromwell made England what she is, and he made New England what she is. But, as far as Mont knew, there was no statue of him on our side; and here these graceless islanders were not men enough to put up his statue in

their own old Hall. What Mont proposed was, that we should go to the American Exchange at Charing Cross, the next day, and call a meeting of Americans, and pass some resolutions. That then we should send round a subscription paper, and appoint a committee, and that the committee should give me the order for the statue. That then we should send a note to the queen, or the Board of Works, or Lord Beaconsfield, or whoever was the right man, and offer it to them. I believe, in my soul, that Mont thought they would accept it, and that he would be asked to deliver "the oration" on its dedication.

You know they always say *the* oration in the newspapers, as if it were ready made, and the man reeled off an hour's worth, like *the* ten commandments, or *the* cable of a ship.

Well, I said that would never do. In the first place, they would not take the statue. In the second place, any one would say it was a "put-up job" to give me the order. Now, I was as much interested in Cromwell as any man. My mother was a Williams, and that always made me think I was a descendant or collateral relation.* Then we chaffed at Mont about his oration, and the thing ended.

But the next day, after Mrs. Pride went away, the fellows came into the studio again, and we were all

* For the convenience of readers who have not Carlyle's *Cromwell* at hand, the editor copies the following passage in explanation of Mr. Scroop's oracles: "Another indubitable thing is, that this Richard, your nephew, has signed himself, in various law-deeds and notarial papers still extant, 'Richard Cromwell, *alias* Williams'; also that his sons and grandsons continued to sign Cromwell, *alias* Williams, and even that our Oliver himself, in his youth, has been known to sign so."—*Carlyle's Cromwell*, vol. i., p. 31.

smoking, and Donald took it up this time. We all agreed that it must be a free-will offering, and that it had better be made by Americans. It was rather delicate to make the queen order a statue to a man who had a hand in cutting off a king's head. And any one could see that there would be endless rows in getting through an appropriation. But we are Republicans. We never had any kings of our own. If a group of Americans gave a good statue of Cromwell, that would be quite another thing. Besides it would be a handsome thing to do. It would knit again the bond of sympathy and all that—"language of Milton, etc., etc."—as we say in speaking on the queen's birthday. It was clear enough that if any statue of Cromwell was to be put there, Americans—not to say New Englanders—must make it, and must give it.

If New England was to make it—well, the fellows were good enough to say that I was the man to take it in hand. That may have been their mistake ; but, as I say, my mother was a Williams, and I liked the commission.

Then we fell to talking about the costume and accessories. I said I would not make him a tired, worn-out old man, with a wart, and one foot in the grave. I would make him in fresh middle life, as he was when he first spoke in Parliament, or when he first addressed his Ironsides. I said there was a deal of the picturesque about Cromwell, and that I was not going to have him an Obadiah Precise or a Praise-God Barebones. Somebody said something about "Crop-Head," and that no Puritan could be made presentable. But we got down Macaulay, and I showed them how a Puritan gentleman wore his hair longer than any man does in England or America to-day. We got out Milton's portraits, and

some photographs from Vandyke, and I took a bit of charcoal—and John lighted up—and I drew on the wall a rough sketch of the statue—well, not unlike what it is to-day. I do not think I ever held quite so close to the first dream of a thing. The fellows said it was fantastic and airy, and all that. But I do not think so. I tell you no man ever made an army out of ploughboys and hedgers, as he did, who had not a deal of vivacity—yes, of fun and light-heartedness in him. And no man ever sat in the saddle four-and-twenty hours—and was good-natured after it—unless he had that amount of “go” in him, push, and dash, and pluck, that you see in my Cromwell. Whether it looks like him is another thing. All I can say is that I modelled the head from myself—and, as I said, I believe, my mother was a Williams.

[He had said it twice, as the reader knows, and here George intimated to him that he was miles ahead of his story. Joel recovered himself and went back.]

Oh well, the rest is of no great importance! The real thing was that I determined to make the statue, because the fellows all said so. I had more time then than I have now, and you know that is a capital studio. It was clear enough that they would be more apt to accept the statue if it were finished, and were good, and approved of, than if it were only proposed. You cannot go to any Board of Works, or any queen, and say, “Will you accept a statue *if* I will make it, and *if* you like it when it is done?” The queen will say, “When it is done I will tell you if I like it, and then I will determine if I will accept it.” Clearly it was better to have that part out of the way first. Besides, I did not mean to have them give the order to Simmons or Greenough or Story, who are all New Englanders. I did not mean to have any nonsense about a “competition.” I bought

the mask of Cromwell's face—but he was old then—and I got some good photographs of pictures of him. As I said, the Mugfords made me a wig, of just the cut and curl of the beginning of Charles's reign, and I bought three looking-glasses and arranged them so I could see my own profile, and model with the wig on. I don't think any one else has done that. The other fellows never liked the model as well as I did, but I like it to this day. I had plenty of time, and enjoyed every dab at it. Though I say it, who should not, there have been worse statues.

How long? Oh, I was more than a year on it before it was done! I began to have more orders. That was the winter I did Walter Raleigh, and I did no end of busts that winter. I'll tell you, I did that pretty Miss Avery, and I did the two Woodcocks that winter. But after the season was over I had absolutely no sitters. London was empty. I had run over here—I mean to Florence—in the spring, just after Easter. It was in Genoa, at old Ricci's yard, that I saw a good block. He was cross because the government man had rejected it, and he had it on his hands. He showed it to me, and I offered him half his price, and he closed with me. He shipped it to London, and I had it in "The Avenue" before August. It was very good stuff; I hope I may never work on worse stone. That was the year I had Filippo with me, and that man yon called *Masaniello*, because he was such an ass. But he was a very good workman, and we had a very good time over that block.

But, as the thing grew, we were more and more in doubt about the presenting it to the queen. You see, a statue of a regicide is not exactly the thing to give to a queen. Everybody likes the queen. I am sure I do. I would not hurt her feelings for the world. I would

not give her the handkerchief Marie Antoinette carried at the guillotine. I would not give her Marie Stuart's crucifix, even though Marie Stuart was her great-grandfather's great-great-grandmother or something. We wanted the nation to have this statue. We wanted it to be in Westminster Hall. But none of us meant to pain or worry her about it. We could not find out exactly whose business it was to receive it. Certainly not those buffers in red vests and black breeches who keep you out from the gallery of the House of Commons. Certainly not the orange-women who sit around the statues and sell oranges to the suitors in the Law-Courts, or did, before the Law-Courts were moved.

I think if Donald had not been away in Australia we should have moved in the proper and methodical way. I think he told me that we ought to have memorialized the Home Secretary, or the Speaker, or the Board of Works, or somebody. But he was away, and we did not know. The statue went on from day to day, and I hoped it would go in somehow. All I was anxious about was the likeness and the accessories. I know I went to the Tower three times to study swords and belts—and at Clive Hall they have a genuine sword of Cromwell's. I went out there, I know, and made a study of that. Oh, yes, the detail of that statue is quite accurate!

. . . Well, there was no end of bother. These fellows here, and Tom, and Harrison, and Thorndike, they were all as good as gold. I know I got cross; I said I would put the statue in the street—in the Brompton Road—and that they might do what they chose with it. But Harrison, he soothed me, and George was always serene and said it would all come out right. Only—do you recollect, George, how mad you made me, asking if

it could not be bored out, so as to be hollow, that it might not weigh so much? And I did tell Filippo to hollow out all that stump he leans on—it is not an inch thick. But the legs are solid, and that statue stands well.

What they determined on was this: they would not give it to any board—they would give it to “Westminster Hall,” in trust for the British nation. Fitz passed the examination and had himself sworn in as a policeman. He was Policeman L., of the something division in Westminster. He made himself very popular with the whole squad—and a very good set of fellows they were—and I dare say are. Fitz was quite a light among them. They used to call him “The Dutch Yankee.”

Then it was Dan who got up the order from the “Commission.” On the whole, that was the crowning stroke of all. Dan invented a “Royal Commission of Sculpture.” There never was such a commission before, and never will be again. But Dan made it, and officered it. He had some stunning office paper, very large and thick, printed for it. It was headed “Royal Commission of Sculpture” in big letters. Dan said it might be useful, and so it proved.

They had hit on the device of the blocks of ice, and they had tested them on that flagging in the back of the studio. Oh, if you lift any weight upon ice carefully and do not bring it down on the run, ice will bear a great deal more than the weight of my Cromwell! People exaggerate the weight of a statue. The specific gravity of marble is only 2.34. So that a fac-simile of George or any one of you would only weigh two and a third times as much as you do, except for the clothes, the accessories, the support and the rest. For that we

were all ready. I had undercut the stump, as I tell you, and the figure stands, if you remember, only on a thin plinth of stone, not two inches and a half thick beneath the shoes. Statues are not nearly so heavy as you think they are.

We had determined to take it through the streets after dark—it is dark so early in December—and we did not care to have a crowd. Then, as soon as Van Stael heard of it, he offered us his horses—said we might go through the brewery and pick. Van Stael said that being brewery horses they would take to Oliver kindly ; and so, indeed, they did. Tom had taken all that part of the thing on himself ; he picked out four noble creatures, big as elephants, and kept them in a stable we had in the mews behind my place. We had settled on Christmas night to make the present. They said that the courts would not sit that day, and we should not annoy any one if they were sitting late, and that there would be fewer people in the way.

In fact, that was the reason we did not go in broad daylight.

But the best luck of all was the snow. Once in ten years it can snow in London, and on that very day of all days it chose to snow—snow that was snow. You might have thought you were in the hotel at Tom Crawford's, it snowed so hard and so still. Really it seemed providential to have it snow so. It made us late, but we never cared for that. By noon we were sure it was going to snow all day. Dan came round and Harrison, and we sent for the other fellows. We split up the floor of the stable, and it was good cedar plank, two inches thick, sound as a nut. We had all the tools we wanted in the studio. We took Dan's old catamaran to pieces ; it was a truck on low wheels he had fussed over. We

mounted it on four runners, which were as well shaped, though not as well shod, as any sleds ever were which carried logs into Pittsfield. By nine o'clock the snow in the Fulham Road was nine inches deep, very little drifted, because there was not much wind. Cromwell had been lying on his back, lashed to his plank, and on rollers, for days, while we waited for the permit and while Dan was arranging about his horses. Fine creatures, they came out all alive into the street, with their sled behind them, and the statue rolled upon it, without the least hitch, in less than half an hour. My men were used to it. They had worked for other people in "The Avenue," and everything is ready for you there. Don't you remember when we saw Gladstone there, before his head was on ?

Once in the Fulham Road and Brompton, everything was easy. Tom drove ; and, though all English horses are puzzled about snow, the brutes behaved very well. The charm of London is that nobody is surprised at anything. Nobody asks any questions if he can help himself. But that night there were few enough people to ask any. Londoners are puzzled by snow as much as their horses. Besides, it was Christmas night, and if any man could be at home, why he was. Indeed, on such a night as that, with snow still falling, you would not have met many people in Boston, where they are not puzzled by snow. Anyway, nobody said a word to us. John followed with my own team and the ice ; it was the ice I set out to tell you about. He had the ice, and he followed.

Nobody said a word. The horses soon settled down to their business, and I suppose they thought Oliver Cromwell was XXX—stout and heavy. I do not think we were an hour and a half coming to Westminster

Hall. Fitz was on duty outside that night. We knew he would be. He had made an exchange, somehow, with the man whose turn it was—who wanted to spend Christmas evening at home. Fitz brought us up all standing, and asked what we wanted.

I told him he had better call the night janitor of the Hall, and he did. The man was a little surprised, but he said Fitz had told him the statue was coming—but he supposed we had an order. I said, Oh, yes, we had an order, but that I thought the Board ought to have sent some men to help us! I explained that we had come in the snow, because it was much easier to move so heavy a weight on the snow, and that the secretary of the Board was afraid it would rain before morning. Meanwhile I went in with him, and by the light of his lantern he read this order from Dan's "Board of Sculpture":

"ROYAL COMMISSION OF SCULPTURE.

"WESTMINSTER, December 24.

"To the Door-Keepers at Westminster Hall:

"This Board has ordered that the new statue shall be moved at night, to prevent crowd and confusion. Give to the bearer every facility.

"By order of the Board.

"DANIEL DIELMAN,

"Secretary."

Then there was a great seal on the corner, and the countersign, "Recorded. No. 3562.

"THOMAS ACKERS."

I said to the man that I was sure the Board's people would be there by midnight. Meanwhile would he

bring us some beer, and we would get ready, and I gave him a sovereign for himself and the beer. He asked Fitz if it was all right. Fitz said he was sure it was—that he had known the statue was coming, for a month, and if the others had not known, it must be they had not heard, which was true.

Well, you know all an Englishman wants is to know from somebody else that it is “all right.” Then if there is a sovereign involved, and plenty of beer, he lets you do much as you choose. So was it with this man. He was provoked to be called up. But once here, he was good-natured enough, and leaving Fitz to open one of the big doors, he paddled off for the beer. One or two other policemen, glad of the shelter, came up, and proved very efficient whenever we wanted some one to lend a hand. But of ourselves we were eight, not counting Van Stael, and Fitz, who is a stout fellow, you know, made nine.

Tom got his team turned round and backed up to the door more easily than I would have supposed. By the time the one-armed old sergeant was back, with the pot-boy and the beer, we had the six steel rails laid across from the sled to the threshold, and Cromwell’s bed was lifted upon the first roller. I told the sergeant that it was very remiss in Sir Christopher Wren that he had not put in a stanchion, which I could haul upon, and I asked if he had heard nothing said about a stanchion. He assured me, almost with tears—for his Christmas had been pretty thorough—that he had no orders about any stanchion, and should not know Sir Christopher if he saw him. Well, I said, I could not wait all night. If they would all lend a hand, we would try without any block or stanchion. We fastened the lift-chain to Cromwell’s bed, I called the policemen into the hall, and all the

fourteen, seven of them and seven of ours, took hold with a will. Dan and Tom fed the rollers as the bed ran up the rail, and in less than a minute Cromwell lay on his back on the floor of Westminster Hall.

It was well-nigh two hundred and fifty years since he had been there last.

Well, then I pretended to make a row. I said it was near midnight, and that the Board's people ought to have been there. I even gave the old janitor another half sovereign, and told him to go to the "Dean and Chapter" gin-shop and see if there was not a Mr. Tamberlik of the Board of Sculpture there; and I asked him to wait there for him, if he were not there. As soon as his back was well turned, John took Filippo and two of the policemen and they handed in the four blocks of Wenham ice I was telling you of. They were good large blocks, twenty inches two ways, by two and a half feet the other way. John fastened them to each other on the floor of Westminster Hall, by tying one rope round the four. He had thus one united block of ice five feet by three feet four. It did very well.

Mont, and the Jackass, and Dielmann, and I had been rigging the steel-rod derrick I showed you. That is really Donald's invention, and he ought to have the credit of it. I put one man at each rod, to keep it from slipping. Cromwell rose, lightly, to the suggestion of the triple blocks—I put three fellows as guides at each end—and we soon had him high on the ice. Then, as I set out to say, all we had to move was a mass of not more than seven hundred and fifty pounds all told, on a bearing of ice of more than sixteen square feet, on those flags of Westminster Hall. We soon had Cromwell and Charles I. foot to foot—I came near saying face to face.

And really, that is all about the ice. [And here Joel

stopped, and made as if the story were done and he would fill his pipe. For the others had begun to smoke. But Mrs. Beard wanted to know what happened then ; and he went on.]

. . . Well. The truth was, that then came our only difficulty. We had brought no pedestal. I had thought of bringing an oak pedestal I had in "The Avenue," but we had not done it. It seemed as if the nation, or the empire, or whatever it is, ought to furnish the pedestal. So here we were, with the statue, and had no pedestal.

Clearly enough, he was to stand next Charles the First. I said, therefore—and Dielmann agreed—that the true thing to do, was to move Charles II.'s statue upon James II.'s pedestal, move James along one upon William III.'s, and leave William to the nation to furnish him a new pedestal. He was popular, and they would like to do it. So I told the fellows to bring up my steel-rod derrick, and we would swing Charles II. down on the floor, and put Oliver in his place. After that, we could move the others.

I do not think it was my fault. But somehow we made a mess here. I suppose we wound the lift-chain a little too low round Charles's loins. I think the man who made him must have undercut his feet and support immensely—more than I did Cromwell's. Anyway, what happened was this. The minute he felt the rope, and was well off his pedestal, he swung round rapidly, his head came down and his heels flew up. The heels struck Filippo and knocked him over. His leg of the derrick slipped, and in two seconds the whole concern, and we who were holding and lifting, came all smash in one heap on the floor. Why, you have no idea how

heavily it fell ! We broke—or it broke—three of those great flags in the floor—I mean cracked them badly.

It was lucky for us that Fitz had taken his policemen off with him, and that the old janitor was not back from the “Dean and Chapter.” Englishmen do not understand such things, and they might have been annoyed. I was sorry, for that statue was really a good piece of work. And I saw, to my real regret, that it was smashed all to pieces. But, after all, the main object was accomplished. Indeed, Charles seemed to have a prejudice, perhaps even terror, about Oliver, and had fallen quite wide of him. All we had to do, was to run the ice blocks close to the pedestal, set up the derrick again, and be careful this time about the centre of gravity ; and really in less than an hour Cromwell was standing, just as you see him there now, between Charles I. and the Duke of York—I mean James II.

The old janitor, as I said, had not come back. But he might be back at any moment. I was for explaining the whole to him. But the others said, Tom in particular, that the man was naturally dull, and that to-night, what with Christmas and our beer, he was quite drunk and abnormally stupid. They thought he might be irritated if he found the broken statue there. And in fine, they were so urgent that I let them pick up the two arms, and the head, and the sceptre, and the boots, and the broken thighs, and carry them out and put them on our sled. Then six of them lifted Charles’s chest and abdomen on our ice slide, and took that to the door, and put that on the sled. And they drove out upon Westminster Bridge and heaved all that good marble into the river. And they did not come back to me.

I took down the derrick, and, just as the old sergeant came back, I got him and Fitz and Tom to help me, and

we put the rods on Tom's pung, that the ice had come in, and he took that back into "The Avenue," down the Fulham Road. Then we untied the blocks of ice and shoved them all out upon the sidewalk. And there they stayed, I believe, till they melted.

The old sergeant was a good deal dazed. But we had taken away all our lanterns. And when he said he had found no Mr. Tamberlik, I said, "Well, I have done all my part, and the Board must do as they choose in the morning." And I gave him another sovereign, and bade him good-night, and went my way. I have never seen him since.

I think I said I had no more orders in London, and I told Filippo that he might pay our rent to Flynn, and join me in Genoa, with Thomas—and he did. As for Mont here, and Tom and the rest, I found them all at the station early the next morning, and we came across by the early "tidal." And we did not go to England again, any of us, for two or three years.

Monty there was afraid they might be displeased with the exchange of the statues.

But I have never heard the first word said about it.

I do not think there is much enthusiasm about the "Merry Monarch," Charles the Second, you know, anyway.

Somehow or other, there was never the first word said in the newspapers about it.

You will hardly believe me, but there has never been the slightest expression of thanks for my Cromwell. It may not be a good statue. That is not for me to say. But it is a good block. And there is good, honest, conscientious work in it. It was a labor of love from the first sketch to the last touch on the sword-hilt. Yet not

a beggar of them all has even begun to say "Thank you," to the artist who made it.

Do you know, Mrs. Beard and Mrs. Mason, I sometimes think that they do not look at those statues at all. They look at the orange-women who sit by them, and at the oranges. But they all hurry through to go into the House of Lords or the House of Commons.

A few Americans stop and look, but there is not one in a hundred who knows or cares for the difference between the Williams look in Oliver's face and Henrietta's nose in Charles's face.

As for the Englishmen, it is clear enough they never look at them, or they would never have left that Hall, as they did, for more than twenty years, without any Cromwell at all.

When I had finished my reading Mrs. Fréchette, as the greatest stranger present, thanked me, and asked if I were not tired.

Then she said : " And you promised us another story, to which this is the introduction."

" Yes. We had a nice English gentleman here at Thanksgiving," I said. " I told him, as an artist's joke, this story of the statue." I said, " Some young men pretended they had made a statue of Cromwell ; they pretended it was set up in Westminster Hall ; they pretended that Charles II. was taken away, and they pretended that this Cromwell statue is now standing between Charles I. and James II.

" And the Englishman said, ' I remember all about it. It made a good deal of talk at the time. There was a good deal about it in the newspapers.'

" After that," said I, " I ceased for three days to

try to make anybody anywhere understand anything about the place of fiction in literature."

How much farther our talk may have gone on the theory of story-telling, I do not know.

Mrs. Fréchette was expressing her grief at the suspension of that admirable weekly, Mr. Swinton's *Story-Teller*—from which I had read "Cromwell's Statue"—when we heard a noise on the gravel and a cheerful shout outside. Door-bell or knocker were not, at that house, as the reader knows. Whoever came so far as the door walked in.

In a minute more we had two more of the Palace Company of last year—George Hackmatack and his wife—and with them, even to Colonel Ingham's surprise, the two Haliburtons.

"George stopped one night at our house, and we thought we would come too," said Mr. Haliburton, simply.

"All right," said the colonel; and Mrs. Ingham took the ladies to their rooms.

CHAPTER IV.

THE whole party came over to our house to breakfast the next day. They dropped in, section by section, and took their places at the table as it might happen, beginning with good appetite promptly on the Rhode Island corn-dodgers and the Spanish mackerel, on the partridges, as they preferred. They owed the partridges to Decker, who had walked out, under Oliver's guidance, with his gun the afternoon the Deckers appeared.

Colonel Ingham was last of all—talking, as is his custom. He had brought Minna Menet with him, and she was laughing.

"I was telling the story of Mrs. Muller," he said. "She wrote home to some friends when she was visiting here, to give an account of our lives. I declare I do not know which of our houses she was at—mine, or Hale's, or the colonel's, or Crapsten's yonder. But she described virtuously our reading aloud, our swimming, the row on the pond, the boys' races, and when she came to the evening, she said :

" ' Then the family meet in the parlor and read aloud to each other the stories they have written in the course of the day. '

"I tell Mrs. Menet," said he, "that she will be as badly off as a man was in that place in the old country, where, while you sit for your photograph, a dentist pulls your teeth and a young rhymster reads you his poems."

Mrs. Menet had to say that so long as they were Colonel Ingham's stories, she should listen gladly. He parried, by saying she would have to hear his stories, while she was in his house, and that there was a certain convenience in having them read from manuscript, for she could then, without shame, take her knitting.

"But to-day," said he, "there is to be no more such waste of time. Decker and Carter are to go bring us some quail and some partridges. Haliburton and Menet and the elder here are to go off in the Sound yonder for a sail at least, and to try their chances for a fish. I shall take the ladies either to the Peak or to Quonochontang, and, if it is warm enough under the lee of the walls, Mrs. Menet shall bring us home a new water-color for the gray parlor."

"And what is the Peak?" asked Mrs. Menet. "The name sounds attractive." The rest of us listened, a little curious to see what the colonel would say of the "Peak," which is really "Ingham's Peak," a pile of lost bowlders, rising possibly one hundred and twenty-five feet above the level of high tide, and named many years ago in his honor.

"The Peak," my dear Mrs. Menet, does not challenge comparison with that of Teneriffe or that of Derbyshire for abruptness. It is easier to climb than either. Trust me, who have been on the summit of all. It commands, however, a near view of Alex Hazard's house and a matchless panoramic view of the ocean. Almost every nook and corner of Spectacle Pond may be traced from its summit by the unaided eye. Best of all, in the minds of the womenkind, there are large bowlders on the spurs which ascend to it, which give good support for weak backs, and good shelter, now from wind and now from sun, and to this adventitious merit it owes a popu-

larity among feminine walking parties, which even the Jungfrau and Chimborazo do not share."

"I sympathize with my sex," cried Minna Menet. "I vote for the Peak, and Mrs. Decker and I will take the water-colors there, if, as you say, it be not cold enough to make ice in our brushes."

"And now," said the colonel, as he declined a fourth cup of coffee, "Miss Bertha shall sing you the ballad of Ben Franklin's ride. The scene is said to have been the old inn, which our friend yonder has buried in the new constructions at Willow Dell."

And we huddled together in the little square music-parlor, and Bertha sang

THE BALLAD OF BEN FRANKLIN AT THE INN.

1.

It was Mr. Benjamin Franklin, a-carrying of the mail,
(Sing ho, for the tallow-chandler's brother.)
He had to be at Newport Friday morning without fail,
(Sing rather, t'other, pother, fuss and bother.)
When passing Trustom Pond, as he rode with might and main,
He was soaked to the skin by the thunder and the rain ;
And when he came to Dead Man's Brook his pony stumbled in,
And tumbled Mr. Franklin off and soaked him through again.
(Sing ho, for the tallow-chandler's mother.)

2.

"Speed up," he cried, "and bring me to the inn at Willow Dell ;"
(Sing ho, for the tallow-chandler's cousin.)
"Ben Seegar there shall give you oats and Hiram groom you well."
(Sing ten, eleven, twelve, a baker's dozen.)
So quick they strode along the road, and here he entered in,
But first, of course, he left his horse all wetted to the skin.
But lo ! so many people were around the landlord's fire
That he was forced to stand outside, and couldn't come no nigher.
(Sing five and four and two and one's a dozen.)

3.

"Good friend," said Mr. Franklin, as if it were of course,

(Sing Trustom Bay and lobster-claw and clam-shell.)

"I wish that you would give a peck of oysters to my horse,"

(Sing lobster-claw and pickerel and clam-shell.)

The landlord heard without a word, and, quick as he was able,
He shelled the fish and took the dish of oysters to the stable ;
And with surprise in all their eyes, the people left the stranger,
And crossed the yard in tempest hard to crowd around the manger.
Ben Franklin he cared not to see, but took the warmest seat,
And hung his coat above the fire and sat and dried his feet.

(Sing centipede and crocodile and bomb-shell.)

4.

Five minutes more, and through the door came Mr. Landlord swearing,

(Sing Oliver, Tom Nopes and Benjamin Seegar,)

And after him came all the folks, a-wondering and a-staring.

(Sing Oliver, Queen Moll and Colonel Wager.)

"Your horse won't touch the oysters, sir, altho' they're fresh and new, sir."

"He won't?" asked Mr. Franklin ; "that's no offence to you, sir.

You see, he doesn't know what's good ; but if he don't, I do, sir !"

(Sing rheumatiz and gout and shaking ager.)

"If he had tried your oysters fried, he might not then refuse 'em ;
But I will sit and toast my feet while Mistress Bowers stews 'em."

"Pardon my dulness," said Mrs. Fréchette, as she walked across to the boathouse with the other ladies, resting herself on Colonel Ingham's arm. "Do you say that Ben Franklin did stop at the house yonder in any such plight? You said that was the scene of the ballad."

"That Ben Franklin often stopped there, dear Mrs. Fréchette, is certain. Is not the house there to this day as an evidence? And Franklin was for a long time the Postmaster-General of the colony under the crown. So that, on the legal principle, *qui facit per alium, facit per se*, he may be said to have carried the mails from

Newport to New York. But I fear he never carried them in person. As for the story of the oysters, though popularly applied to Franklin in this country, it is as old as Jo Miller, and, I am afraid, older."

And here they came to the landing and to the beautiful little lake—which is the colonel's joy and delight—laughing with the light and life of a light breeze. The ladies were warmly dressed—the colonel had half a dozen wolf-skins in the boathouse to lay over them—and they declared that they were not cold, as he pulled them across the pond. They joined loyally in his delight—new every morning—as they opened one and another vista in their little voyage, and, as he said to Polly Ingham afterward, "It was a pleasure to have them on board." To tell the whole truth, his final estimate of people as worthy or unworthy, was based on the opinions they happened to express in this very expedition.

Clara was steering, and she brought up the boat handily at "Julius's Landing," and the colonel bade his guests disembark. They craftily won his heart completely by protesting that the voyage was not long enough. "My geography is as bad as my history, Colonel Ingham. Was it really here that Julius Cæsar landed? Somehow, I thought it was on the other side." And again the colonel explained.

Piles of red oak leaves, of yellow chestnut leaves, of red sumach leaves, to plunge through; a stiff climb up the wooded bank of the lake; a pretty stile to mount and to descend; a broad stretch of the downs in the crisp, electric air; a little bit of ruin, where a farm-building of more populous days had rotted away; another ascent by a zigzag path of the little hill dignified as Ingham's Peak, and then the guide let his followers turn and look upon the ocean.

As always, it was as new to them as if they had never seen it. Blue—so blue! “deep, dark and beautiful;” just a strip of foam at one spot, where it broke on a projecting point; it swept round half their horizon. Some ; ; dozen or more miles away, quite within the great semicircle, lay the island called “Claudia” by some—not the Claudia of St. Paul’s voyage, but the Block Island of to-day. The white hotels on the cliffs shone out in the clear, low sunlight of December, and so distinct was the whole picture of the island that it was impossible to believe that those homes were so far away.

“But, if there is to be any drawing,” said Colonel Ingham, “it is not to be here.” And he drew the party away to “the shelter of a great rock,” where they were screened from the wind, and where the full southern sun blazed upon them. Gershom Wanton, who had carried the easels, was relieved of his load—his brother Gurton had brought up furs from the boat—and the ladies boldly unstrapped his pack, and began.

“Tell me, Colonel Ingham,” said Mrs. Fréchette, as she mixed her cobalt with a dash of rose madder, “are you quite in earnest in what you say of short stories? And tell me why the novels of America are so short, while the novels of England are so long? And speak to me in detail. For, indeed, I need instruction. I have tried at every corner. I have sent the same story to the *Christian Union*, and *Independent*, and *Examiner*, and *Ledger*. I rewrote the first page because it was thumbed and badly soiled by ‘readers,’ and I sent it again to *Godley’s Book*, to *Lippincott*, to *Scribner*, and to *Harper*; I then faced it again, and sent it to the *Atlantic* and the *Manhattan*. Every editor has been grateful to me, and yet has returned it. Do you perhaps know, from some general law, what is the matter

with it? It seems to me a reasonably good story. I should know that George Eliot did not write it. But I have read many worse things in my day."

"George Eliot wrote no good short stories that I remember," said the colonel. "Yours would doubtless be better if it were longer. I do not say that as matter of compliment. But it has been my duty to read thousands, and, in general, that is the difficulty. The condensation is put in at the wrong place. I think you would make a very good novel."

"Oddly enough, in a great many cases I have observed that women tired of their work in the middle."

"Did you perhaps lay yours by for some weeks? Did you then take it up and say, 'I will finish off that horrid thing'? Did you finish it slap-dash, and send it, with its sins, to the editor?"

"Colonel Ingham, I am afraid of you. You are a wizard! I did that very thing."

"Yes. You could not work in the same heat the second time as the first. The two parts of your casting show the joint, and indeed cleave apart there. I have seen many such."

"Can you advise?" said Mrs. Fréchette, seriously this time. "I am very teachable."

"No! I wish I could," said he. "Often did I wish to, when I also was an editor. The only good rule is my uncle's for a sermon: 'When it is done, leave off the introduction and omit the conclusion.'"

"People are always telling you why they write their stories. Who cares? This, by the way, is the rule for public speech. The man who talks of himself is almost certainly a fool."

"BEGIN."

"I see," said Mrs. Fréchette. "It is like this thing

—water-color—in which Mrs. Decker and I both know that what we need is *l'audace, l'audace, toujours l'audace*, and to leave out everything that is not necessary."

"Every jot and every tittle," said the colonel. "Trust one who knows his own sins. Every word and syllable should fight for its life—for its right to be. 'Yet' is better than 'nevertheless.' And how much better to say, 'Jesus went to Jerusalem' than to say, 'The founder of our religion proceeded to the metropolis of his country.' But I did not mean to speak of style. If there is any sentence which the story does not need, or which does not help the reader, let it stand aside. As Mr. Ross said to me of the first number of my magazine, 'It would have been better had you passed it all through the telegraph,'"

"Which reminds me that I once wrote a short story, meaning to do that very thing with it.

"They had just opened the Rapid Telegraph between Boston and New York.

"I had just heard Mr. Trowbridge's curious account of his discovery, that you can receive what they call the earth current and catch any one's secret.

"As I walked home I said, 'Who will be first to make a novel of this? I will.'

"There is a good enough illustration of the genesis of a story.

"I said, 'What shall be the secret discovered?' *Answer.* 'A faithless lover's.'

"'Who shall discover it?' *Answer.* 'The girl he wrongs.'

"There is the story, you see. All I had to do—and I did it before I went to bed—was to find a name for the man, a name for the girl, a place for both, and tell the story.

“Then I did not want to have people sorry for her—I did want them to despise and dislike him.

“So as you put reds in your foreground to bring them forward, and blues in the distances to throw them back, I tinged my man and my woman.

“Then I stinted myself to two hundred and fifty words, I think, because the story was to go by the Rapid Telegraph.”

“I remember the story,” said Mrs. Decker. “We read it on the Celtic. I believe I wished it were longer.”

“You are very good,” said the colonel. “Of course it could have been longer. There is a skeleton for three volumes. But I think it better to write a short story from which a long one can be evolved, than to write a long one which is to be cut down to so small a pattern.”

It was thus that these crafty women lured Colonel Ingham from his resolution, and, after they had all returned home, persuaded him to read them the story of

THE RETURN MESSAGE.

She parted from him with the old hankering for something better. What was amiss? Must it always be amiss? Had all women this hitch, this jar, with the men they loved? Of course she loved him. Of course he loved her. Why could not there be the abandon and joy she had always dreamed of in her girlhood when she read of love?

“She” was Ruth Lindsay. You would have called her a queen anywhere. Tall, handsome—oh, so handsome!—and still lovely; young, but strong; grave, but cheerful; joyous, but wise; loved by all her school

companions, half worshipped by half the men. And Ruth had parted thus, dissatisfied at heart—though she was too proud to own this—from Alfred Moshier. They had been engaged, now seven weeks, since they crossed the ocean on the Parthia.

“I will not worry any longer,” said Ruth, aloud. She girt herself for work. She went down to old Mrs. Royal’s and washed the baby, who needed it badly, aired the bedroom while Mrs. Royal sat over the fire. She went to the French reading, and laughed her best and brightest as the professor read “L’Ami Inconnu.” She came home, and looked round her work-room for something that would take her out of herself. “I will talk with the newts and moles,” she said. “I will see what they are saying.”

So she lifted her telephone from the wall, called Caesar’s boy Pompey, and bade him carry the heavy plates, and went down to her dreaming-place in the garden. She sent Pompey away, sank the plates herself, with her trowel, in the border, and began to listen to the endless sounds, which came in a strange refrain, as grass grows, and dews distill, and crystals take form in mother earth. She was soothed by the unrhythmed music; more and more did it rest her, when suddenly,

“Taap, tap, tap—tap—tap, taap—tap, taap, tap—tap—tap, tap, tap—taap—long and short, in tones no mole uses nor root of grass, sounded the word “Dearest” to her well-trained sense. “Fine-ear” himself, in the story, never listened more absorbed. “Dearest, dearest,” the taps went on, “answer—answer now.—MOSHIER.” More faint, but perfectly clear, came, from another direction, as was evident, “O. K. I am here—wire open. Your pet.” “My pet and my darling,” said Moshier, in answer; “oh, I am dead bored—say

something sweet to me." "Poor old boy ! poor darling dear ! where has he been ?" was the telegraph girl's reply. "He has not been with his heart's delight, he can tell you that," tapped Moshier. And Ruth, or Fine-ears, threw the listening-cup upon the ground. She was one too many in this *tête-à-tête*.

Moshier was an observer in the great Tamworth Observatory. He was using the time-wire in this disgusting intrigue. Ruth had hit upon Mr. Trowbridge's curious discovery, by which you can take, with the telephone, anywhere from the ground, the "return message," as the electricians call it. She sent her return message by mail to the faithless Alfred as soon as she reached the house. Her mystery was solved. He did not love her. And she—she had been trying, from mere loyalty, to love him. She wrote her proud note of dismissal with absolute joy.

She went to the reception at Mrs. Mandell's once more perfectly happy.

The sailing party returned late to lunch, just as the others would have left the table. But they were not unused to such irregularities at Sybaris, and the appetites of the seamen were provided for, while the others sat by, to see them eat and to hear their adventures. As they were finishing this lazy meal—which had now lasted perhaps two hours—the dogs were heard without, and the sportsmen came in, not disinclined to begin in turn. Mrs. Ingham proposed to them to tell their adventures in the gray parlor, and to have their lunch brought to them there. To this they agreed ; and thus, when, late in the afternoon, we crossed over from our house, where we had finished our lunch and the naps which followed

them, we found the third edition of their lunch going forward, with the large party lolling or lying or sitting on various divans, lounges, or easy-chairs, engaged in quite an earnest discussion of the subject brought up by Mrs. Menet in the morning. As it happened, the group was a group of short story-tellers. I had done my little share in the same line, and the conversation had to me an interest which was, in a way, professional.

CHAPTER V.

ONE of the boys gave up his chair to me as I entered, and flung himself on a grizzly-bear-skin, a present from a Ute chief to Ingham. My entrance scarcely made an interruption.

He turned to me, as is his way, for confirmation for some statement which seemed a little audacious.

I said that it seemed to me that a short story was to be compared rather to a play than a novel. I should not insist on the Unities. I wrote a short story once, of which the action covered nearly sixty years. But you must not, I think, have many characters; I think you must have no episodes; I doubt whether you may even have a double plot. If you want to marry off two or three accessory couples at the end, do so. But do not let their flirtations interfere with the play of the story. Take, for instance, Mr. Stockton's perfect story of the bull-calf. Here you are in the confidence of the artist-author from the beginning. He tells you all his thought. You can see his foibles better than he sees them himself. You sleep with him. You wake with him. But you never leave him. He never leaves you. There is no "We must now turn to see what A and B are doing." You do not turn to anything. You begin at the beginning, and you end at the end.

Mrs. Fréchette listened attentively, nodded—as to say she understood—and indeed said, "I see already that

my last story had four plots, where each of you gentlemen would have had but one."

"Say, rather," I said, "that we old stagers should have made four stories of the four plots. I then told her how I once made eight stories in the same afternoon. I was responsible for the Christmas number of a magazine. We had admirable writing in it, for the purposes of those who wrote our advertisements. Very important people had contributed. There was no doubt but the "trade" would order largely. But it was revealed to me, as I took a long walk, that, on the whole, the little collection was dull. This is an unpardonable fault. It was wise. It was valuable. It was even witty. It was instructive. It was pathetic. But it was not amusing. It was dull. Now, three fourths of it had passed the press. And there is as yet no method known by which you can either inspissate entertainingness into a dull article—no—or varnish it with an entertaining copal. People will say to a portrait painter, "Could not you make it all just two shades lighter in complexion?" but he cannot do it. No more can a magazine editor key up a whole number to be two semitones more entertaining, though often he would gladly do so.

What he can do, I did.

He can put in one preposterous burlesque. He can thus raise the average, and with his deep bass accompaniment growling double B, he can, for six or eight pages, interpolate a very light, even frothy or gaseous, strain—let us hope it may be adagio itself—and in exquisite melody.

Briefly I inserted one article of eight pages of burlesque, and these eight pages contained eight short stories.

As I said, I created the plots in an hour's walk. I wrote out the tales in two *séances* the next day.

Mrs. Menet was good enough to say that she thought it would be instructive if we could, at that stage, hear them.

I sent Paul out to the library for the well-remembered volume, and when he had found it he read, at my request,

THE SURVIVOR'S STORY.

Fortunately we were with our wives.

It is in general an excellent custom, as I will explain if opportunity is given.

First, you are thus sure of good company.

For four mortal hours we had ground along, and stopped and waited and started again, in the drifts between Westfield and Springfield. We had shrieked out our woes by the voices of fire-engines. Brave men had dug. Patient men had sat inside and waited for the results of the digging. At last, in triumph, at eleven and three quarters, as they say in Cinderella, we entered the Springfield station.

It was Christmas Eve !

Leaving the train to its devices, Blatchford and his wife (her name was Sarah), and I with mine (her name was Phebe), walked quickly with our little sacks out of the station, ploughed and waded along the white street, not to the Massasoit—no, but to the old Eagle and Star, which was still standing, and was a favorite with us youngsters. Good waffles, maple syrup, *ad lib.*, such fixings of other sorts as we preferred, and some liberty. The amount of liberty in absolutely first-class hotels is but small. A drowsy boy waked, and turned up the gas. Blatchford entered our names on the register, and cried at once, “By George, Wolfgang is here, and

Dick ! What luck !” for Dick and Wolfgang also travel with their wives. The boy explained that they had come up the river in the New Haven train, were only nine hours behind time, had arrived at ten, and had just finished supper and gone to bed. We ordered rare beefsteak, waffles, dip-toast, omelettes with kidneys, and omelettes without ; we toasted our feet at the open fire in the parlor ; we ate the supper when it was ready ; and we also went to bed ; rejoicing that we had home with us, having travelled with our wives ; and that we could keep our Merry Christmas here. If only Wolfgang and Dick and their wives would join us, all would be well. (Wolfgang’s wife was named Bertha, and Dick’s was named Hosanna—a name I have never met with elsewhere.)

Bed followed ; and I am a graceless dog that I do not write a sonnet here on the unbroken slumber that followed. Breakfast, by arrangement of us four, at nine. At 9.30, to us enter Bertha, Dick, Hosanna, and Wolfgang, to name them in alphabetical order. Four chairs had been turned down for them. Four chops, four omelettes, and four small oval dishes of fried potatoes had been ordered, and now appeared. Immense shouting, immense kissing among those who had that privilege, general wondering, and great congratulating that our wives were there. Solid resolution that we would advance no farther. Here, and here only, in Springfield itself, would we celebrate our Christmas Day.

It may be remarked in parenthesis that we had learned already that no train had entered the town since eleven and a quarter ; and it was known by telegraph that none was within thirty-four miles and a half of the spot, at the moment the vow was made.

We waded and ploughed our way through the snow to

church. I think Mr. Rumfry, if that is the gentleman's name who preached an admirable Christmas sermon, in a beautiful church there is, will remember the platoon of four men and four women, who made perhaps a fifth of his congregation in that storm—a storm which shut off most church-going. Home again: a jolly fire in the parlor, dry stockings, and dry slippers. Turkeys, and all things fitting for the dinner; and then a general assembly, not in a caravansary, not in a coffee-room, but in the regular guests' parlor of a New England second-class hotel, where, as it was ordered, there were no "transients" but ourselves that day; and whence all the "boarders" had gone either to their own rooms or to other homes.

For people who have their wives with them, it is not difficult to provide entertainment on such an occasion.

"Bertha," said Wolfgang, "could you not entertain us with one of your native dances?"

"Ho! slave," said Dick to Hosanna, "play upon the virginals." And Hosanna played a lively Arab air on the tavern piano, while the fair Bertha danced with a spirit unusual. Was it indeed in memory of the Christmas of her own dear home in Circassia?

All that, from "Bertha" to "Circassia," is not so. We did not do this at all. That was all a slip of the pen. What we did was this. John Blatchford pulled the bell-cord till it broke (they always break in novels, and sometimes they do in taverns). This bell-cord broke. The sleepy boy came; and John said, "Caitiff, is there never a barber in the house?" The frightened boy said there was; and John bade him send him. In a minute the barber appeared—black, as was expected—with a shining face, and white teeth, and in shirt-sleeves, and broad inquiry. "Do yon tell me, Cæsar," said John,

“that in your country they do not wear their coats on Christmas day?” “Sartin, they do, sar, when they go outdoors.”

“Do you tell me, Cæsar,” said Dick, “that they have doors in your country?” “Sartin, they do,” said poor Cæsar, flurried.

“Boy,” said I, “the gentlemen are making fun of you. They want to know if you ever keep Christmas in your country without a dance.”

“Never, sar,” said poor Cæsar.

“Do they dance without music?”

“No, sar ; never.”

“Go, then,” I said, in my sternest accents—“go fetch a zittern, or a banjo, or a kit, or a hurdy-gurdy, or a fiddle.”

The black boy went, and returned with his violin. And as the light grew gray, and crept into the darkness, and as the darkness gathered more thick and more, he played for us, and he played for us, tune after tune ; and we dauced—first with precision, then in sport, then in wild holiday frenzy. We began with waltzes—so great is the convenience of travelling with your wives—where should we have been, had we been all sole alone, four men ? Probably playing whist or euchre. And now we began with waltzes, which passed into polkas, which subsided into round dances ; and then in very exhaustion we fell back in a grave quadrille. I danced with Hosanna ; Wolfgang and Sarah were our *vis-à-vis*. We went through the same set that Noah and his three boys danced in the ark with their four wives, and which has been danced ever since, in every moment, on one or another spot of the dry earth, going round it with the sun, like the drumbeat of England—right and left, first two forward, right hand across, *pastorale*—the whole

series of them ; we did them with as much spirit as if it had been on a flat on the side of Ararat, ground yet too muddy for croquet. Then Blatchford called for "Virginia Reel," and we raced and chased through that. Poor Cæsar began to get exhausted, but a little flip from down-stairs helped him amazingly. And, after the flip, Dick cried, "Can you not dance 'Money-Musk'?" And in one wild frenzy of delight we danced "Money Musk" and "Hull's Victory" and "Dusty Miller" and "Youth's Companion," and "Irish Jigs" on the closet-door lifted off for the occasion, till the men lay on the floor screaming with the fun, and the women fell back on the sofas, fairly faint with laughing.

All this last, since the sentence after "Circassia," is a mistake. There was not any bell, nor any barber, and we did not dance at all. This was all a slip of my memory.

What we really did was this :

John Blatchford said, "Let us all tell stories." It was growing dark and he had put more logs on the fire.

Bertha said :

"Heap on more wood, the wind is chill ;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our merry Christmas still."

She said that because it was in "Bertha's Visit," a very stupid book, which she remembered.

Then Wolfgang told

THE PENNY-A-LINER'S STORY.

[Wolfgang is a reporter, or was then, on the staff of the *Star*.]

When I was on the *Tribune* (he never was on the

Tribune an hour, unless he calls selling the *Tribune* at Fort Plains being on the *Tribune*). But I tell the story as he told it. He said :

When I was on the *Tribune*, I was despatched to report Mr. Webster's great reply to Hayne. This was in the days of stages. We had to ride from Baltimore to Washington early in the morning to get there in time. I found my boots were gone from my room when the stage-man called me, and I reported that speech in worsted slippers my wife had given me the week before. As we came into Bladensburg it grew light, and I recognized my boots on the feet of my fellow-passenger—there was but one other man in the stage. I turned to claim them, but stopped in a moment, for it was Webster himself. How serene his face looked as he slept there ! He woke soon, passed the time of day, offered me a part of a sandwich—for we were old friends—I was counsel against him in the Ogden case. Said Webster to me, “ Steele, I am bothered about this speech ; I have a paragraph in it which I cannot word up to my mind ;” and he repeated it to me. “ How would this do ?” said he. “ ‘ Let us hope that the sense of unrestricted freedom may be so intertwined with the desire to preserve a connection of the several parts of the body politic, that some arrangement, more or less lasting, may prove in a measure satisfactory.’ How would that do ?”

I said I liked the idea, but the expression seemed involved.

“ And it is involved,” said Webster ; “ but I can't improve it.”

“ How would this do ?” said I.

“ ‘ LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE ! ’ ”

“Capital !” he said, “capital ! write that down for me.” At that moment we arrived at the Capitol steps. I wrote down the words for him, and from my notes he read them, when that place in the speech came along.

All of us applauded the story.

Phebe then told

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS'S STORY.

You remind me of the impression that very speech made on me, as I heard Henry Chapin deliver it at an exhibition at Leicester Academy. I resolved then that I would free the slave, or perish in the attempt. But how ? I, a woman—disfranchised by the law ? Ha ! I saw !

I went to Arkansas. I opened a “Normal College, or Academy for Teachers.” We had balls every second night, to make it popular. Immense numbers came. Half the teachers of the Southern States were trained there. I had admirable instructors in oil painting and music—the most essential studies. The arithmetic I taught myself: I taught it well. I achieved fame. I achieved wealth ; invested in Arkansas five per cents. Only one secret device I persevered in. To all—old and young, innocent girls and sturdy men—I so taught the multiplication table, that one fatal error was hidden in its array of facts. The nine line is the difficult one. I buried the error there. “Nine times six,” I taught them, “is fifty-six.” The rhyme made it easy. The gilded falsehood passed from lip to lip, from State to State—one little speck in a chain of golden verity. I retired from teaching. Slowly I watched the growth of the rebellion. At last the aloe blossom shot up—after its hundred years of waiting. The Southern heart was

fired. I brooded over my revenge. I repaired to Richmond. I opened a first-class boarding-house, where all the Cabinet, and most of the Senate, came for their meals ; and I had eight permanents. Soon their brows clouded. The first flush of victory passed away. Night after night they sat over their calculations, which all came wrong. I smiled—and was a villain ! None of their sums would prove. None of their estimates matched the performance ! Never a muster-roll that fitted as it should do ! And I—the despised boarding-mistress—I alone knew why ! Often and often, when Memminger has said to me, with an oath, “ Why this discordancy in our totals ? ” have my lips burned to tell the secret ! But no ! I hid it in my bosom. And when, at last, I saw a black regiment march into Richmond, singing “ John Brown,” I cried, for the first time in twenty years, “ Six times nine is fifty-four ; ” and gloated in my sweet revenge.

Then was hushed the harp of Phebe, and Dick told his story.

THE INSPECTOR OF GAS-METERS' STORY.

Mine is a tale of the ingratitude of republics. It is well-nigh thirty years since I was walking by the Owego and Ithaca Railroad—a crooked road, not then adapted to high speed. Of a sudden I saw that a long cross timber, on a trestle, high above a swamp, had sprung up from its ties. I looked for a spike with which to secure it. I found a stone with which to hammer the spike. But, at this moment, a train approached, down hill. I screamed. They heard ! But the engine had no power to stop the heavy train. With the presence of mind of a poet, and the courage of a hero, I flung my own

weight on the fatal timber. I would hold it down, or perish. The engine came. The elasticity of the pine timber whirled me in the air! But I held on. The tender crossed. Again I was flung in wild gyrations. But I held on. "It is no bed of roses," I said; "but what act of Parliament was there that I should be happy." Three passenger cars and ten freight cars, as was then the vicious custom of that road, passed me. But I held on, repeating to myself texts of Scripture to give me courage. As the last car passed, I was whirled into the air by the rebound of the rafter. "Heavens!" I said, "if my orbit is a hyperbola, I shall never return to earth." Hastily I estimated its ordinates, and calculated the curve. What bliss! It was a parabola! After a flight of a hundred and seventeen cubits, I landed, head down, in a soft mud-hole!

In that train was the young U. S. Grant, on his way to West Point for examination. But for me the armies of the Republic would have had no leader.

I pressed my claim, when I asked to be appointed Minister to England. Although no one else wished to go, I alone was forgotten. Such is gratitude with republics!

He ceased. Then Sarah Blatchford told

THE WHEELER AND WILSON'S OPERATIVE'S STORY.

My father had left the anchorage of Sorrento for a short voyage, if voyage it may be called. Life was young, and this world seemed heaven. The yacht bowled on under tight-reefed stay-sails, and all was happy. Suddenly the corsairs seized us; all were slain in my defence; but I—this fatal gift of beauty bade them spare my life!

Why linger on my tale ! In the Zenana of the Shah of Persia I found my home. "How escape his eye?" I said ; and, fortunately, I remembered that in my reticule I carried one box of F. Kidder's indelible ink. Instantly I applied the liquid in the large bottle to one cheek. Soon as it was dry, I applied that in the small bottle, and sat in the sun one hour. My head ached with the sunlight, but what of that ? I was a fright, and I knew all would be well.

I was consigned, so soon as my hideous deficiencies were known, to the sewing-room. Then how I sighed for my machine ! Alas ! it was not there ; but I constructed an imitation from a cannon-wheel, a coffee-mill, and two nut-crackers. And with this I made the under-clothing for the palace and the Zenana.

I also vowed revenge. Nor did I doubt one instant how ; for in my youth I had read Lucretia Borgia's memoirs, and I had a certain rule for slowly slaying a tyrant at a distance. I was in charge of the Shah's own linen. Every week I set back the buttons on his shirt collars by the width of one thread ; or, by arts known to me, I shrunk the binding of the collar by a like proportion. Tighter and tighter with each week did the vice close around his larynx. Week by week, at the high religious festivals, I could see his face was blacker and blacker. At length the hated tyrant died. The leeches called it apoplexy. I did not undeceive them. His guards sacked the palace. I bagged the diamonds, fled with them to Trebizond, and sailed thence in a caïque to South Boston. No more ! such memories oppress me.

Her voice was hushed. I told my tale in turn.

THE CONDUCTOR'S STORY.

I was poor. Let this be my excuse, or rather my apology. I entered a Third Avenue car at Thirty-sixth Street, and saw the conductor sleeping. Satan tempted me, and I took from him his badge, 213. I see the hated figures now. When he woke, he knew not he had lost it. The car started, and he walked to the rear. With the badge on my coat I collected eight fares within, stepped forward, and sprang into the street. Poverty is my only apology for the crime. I concealed myself in a cellar where men were playing with props. Fear is my only excuse. Lest they should suspect me, I joined their game, and my forty cents were soon three dollars and seventy. With these ill-gotten gains I visited the gold exchange, then open evenings. My superior intelligence enabled me to place well my modest means, and at midnight I had a competence. Let me be a warning to all young men. Since that night I have never gambled more.

I threw the hated badge into the river. I bought a palace on Murray Hill, and led an upright and honorable life. But since that night of terror the sound of the horse-cars oppresses me. Always since, to go up-town or down, I order my own coupé, with George to drive me ; and never have I entered the cleanly, sweet, and airy carriage provided for the public. I cannot ; conscience is too much for me. You see in me a monument of crime.

I said no more. A moment's pause, a few natural tears, and a single sigh hushed the assembly ; then Bertha, with her siren voice, told

THE WIFE OF BIDDEFORD'S STORY.

At the time you speak of I was the private governess of two lovely boys, Julius and Pompey—Pompey the senior of the two. The black-eyed darling ! I see him now. I also see, hanging to his neck, his blue-eyed brother, who had given Pompey his black eye the day before. Pompey was generous to a fault ; Julius parsimonious beyond virtue. I, therefore, instructed them in two different rooms. To Pompey, I read the story of “Waste not, want not.” To Julius, on the other hand, I spoke of the All-love of his great Mother Nature, and her profuse gifts to her children. Leaving him with grapes and oranges, I stepped back to Pompey, and taught him how to untie parcels so as to save the string. Leaving him winding the string neatly, I went back to Julius, and gave to him ginger-cakes. The dear boys grew from year to year. They outgrew their knickerbockers, and had trowsers. They outgrew their jackets, and became men ; and I felt that I had not lived in vain. I had conquered nature. Pompey, the little spendthrift, was the honored cashier of a savings bank, till he ran away with the capital. Julius, the miser, became the chief croupier at the New Crockford’s. One of those boys is now in Botany Bay, and the other is in Sierra Leone !

“I thought you were going to say in a hotter place,” said John Blatchford ; and he told his story :

THE STOKER'S STORY.

We were crossing the Atlantic in a Cunarder. I was second stoker on the starboard watch. In that horrible gale we spoke of before dinner, the coal was exhausted,

and I, as the best-dressed man, was sent up to the captain to ask him what we should do. I found him himself at the wheel. He almost cursed me, and bade me say nothing of coal, at a moment when he must keep her head to the wind with her full power, or we were lost. He bade me slide my hand into his pocket, and take out the key of the after freight-room, open that, and use the contents for fuel. I returned hastily to the engine-room, and we did as we were bid. The room contained nothing but old account books, which made a hot and effective fire.

On the third day the captain came down himself into the engine-room, where I had never seen him before, called me aside, and told me that by mistake he had given me the wrong key ; asking me if I had used it. I pointed to him the empty room ; not a leaf was left. He turned pale with fright. As I saw his emotion he confided to me the truth. The books were the evidences or accounts of the British national debt ; of what is familiarly known as the Consolidated Fund, or the " Consols." They had been secretly sent to New York for the examination of James Fiske, who had been asked to advance a few millions on this security to the English Exchequer, and now all evidence of indebtedness was gone !

The captain was about to leap into the sea. But I dissuaded him. I told him to say nothing ; I would keep his secret ; no man else knew it. The government would never utter it. It was safe in our hands. He reconsidered his purpose. We came safe to port and did—nothing.

Only on the first quarter-day which followed, I obtained leave of absence, and visited the Bank of England, to see what happened. At the door was this pla-

card, "Applicants for dividends will file a written application, with name and amount, at desk A, and proceed in turn to the Paying Teller's Office." I saw their ingenuity. They were making out new books, certain that none would apply but those who were accustomed to. So skilfully do men of government study human nature.

I stepped lightly to one of the public desks. I took one of the blanks. I filled it out, "John Blatchford, £1747 6s. 8d." and handed it in at the open trap. I took my place in the queue in the teller's room. After an agreeable hour, a pile, not thick, of Bank of England notes was given to me; and since that day, I have quarterly drawn that amount from the maternal government of that country. As I left the teller's room, I observed the captain in the queue. He was the seventh man from the window, and I have never seen him more.

We then asked Hosanna for her story.

THE N. E. HISTORICAL GENEALOGIST'S STORY.

"My story," said she, "will take us far back into the past. It will be necessary for me to dwell on some incidents in the first settlement of this country, and I propose that we first prepare and enjoy the Christmas tree. After this, if your courage holds, you shall hear an over-true tale." Pretty creature, how little she knew what was before us!

As we had sat listening to the stories, we had been preparing for the tree. Shopping being out of the question, we were fain from our own stores to make up our presents, while the women were arranging nuts, and blown egg-shells, and pop-corn strings from the stores of the Eagle and Star. The popping of corn in two

corn-poppers had gone on through the whole of the story-telling. All being so nearly ready, I called the drowsy boy again, and, showing him a very large stick in the wood-box, asked him to bring me a hatchet. To my great joy he brought the axe of the establishment, and I bade him farewell. How little did he think what was before him ! So soon as he had gone I went stealthily down the stairs, and stepping out into the deep snow, in front of the hotel, looked up into the lovely night. The storm had ceased, and I could see far back into the heavens. In the still evening my strokes might have been heard far and wide, as I cut down one of the two pretty Norways that shaded Mr. Pyncheon's front walk, next the hotel. I dragged it over the snow. Blatchford and Steele lowered sheets to me from the large parlor window, which I attached to the larger end of the tree. With infinite difficulty they hauled it in. I joined them in the parlor, and soon we had as stately a tree growing there as was in any home of joy that night in the river counties.

With swift fingers did our wives adorn it. I should have said above, that we travelled with our wives, and that I would recommend that custom to others. It was impossible, under the circumstances, to maintain much secrecy ; but it had been agreed that all who wished to turn their backs to the circle, in the preparation of presents, might do so without offence to the others. -As the presents were wrapped, one by one, in paper of different colors, they were marked with the names of giver and receiver, and placed in a large clothes-basket. At last all was done. I had wrapped up my knife, my pencil-case, my letter-case, for Steele, Blatchford, and Dick. To my wife I gave my gold watch-key, which fortunately fits her watch ; to Hosanna, a mere trifle, a seal

ring I wore ; to Bertha, my gold chain ; and to Sarah Blatchford, the watch which generally hung from it. For a few moments we retired to our rooms while the pretty Hosanna arranged the forty-nine presents on the tree. Then she clapped her hands, and we rushed in. What a wondrous sight ! What a shout of infantine laughter and charming prattle ! for in that happy moment were we not all children again ?

I see my story hurries to its close. Dick, who is the tallest, mounted a step-ladder, and called us by name to receive our presents. I had a nice gold watch-key from Hosanna, a knife from Steele, a letter-case from Phebe, and a pretty pencil-case from Bertha. Dick had given me his watch-chain, which he knew I fancied ; Sarah Blatchford, a little toy of a Geneva watch she wore ; and her husband, a handsome seal ring, a present to him from the Czar, I believe ; Phebe, that is my wife—for we were travelling with our wives—had a pencil-case from Steele, a pretty little letter-case from Dick, a watch-key from me, and a French repeater from Blatchford ; Sarah Blatchford gave her the knife she carried, with some bright verses, saying that it was not to cut love ; Bertha, a watch-chain ; and Hosanna, a ring of turquoise and amethysts. The other presents were similar articles, and were received, as they were given, with much tender feeling. But at this moment, as Dick was on the top of the flight of steps, handing down a red apple from the tree, a slight catastrophe occurred.

The first I was conscious of was the angry hiss of steam. In a moment I perceived that the steam-boiler, from which the tavern was warmed, had exploded. The floor beneath us rose, and we were driven with it through the ceiling and the rooms above—through an opening in the roof into the still night. Around us in

the air were flying all the other contents and occupants of the Star and Eagle. How bitterly was I reminded of Dick's flight from the railroad track of the Ithaca and Owego Railroad ! But I could not hope such an escape as his. Still my flight was in a parabola ; and, in a period not longer than it has taken to describe it, I was thrown senseless, at last, into a deep snow-bank near the United States Arsenal.

Tender hands lifted me and assuaged me. Tender teams carried me to the City Hospital. Tender eyes brooded over me. Tender science cared for me. It proved necessary, before I recovered, to amputate my two legs at the hips. My right arm was wholly removed, by a delicate and curious operation, from the socket. We saved the stump of my left arm, which was amputated just below the shoulder. I am still in the hospital to recruit my strength. The doctor does not like to have me occupy my mind at all ; but he says there is no harm in my compiling my memoirs, or writing magazine stories. My faithful nurse has laid me on my breast on a pillow, has put a camel's-hair pencil in my mouth, and, feeling almost personally acquainted with John Carter, the artist, I have written out for you, in his method, the story of my last Christmas.

I am sorry to say that the others have never been found.

“ Observe,” I said—the reader sees from the beginning that this is wild burlesque—“ it is a satire on the pretence that people can entertain themselves at Christmas by telling stories. It almost confesses that it is an answer to a challenge to furnish stories not three hun-

dred words long. All the same, they are "stories." Each of them could be padded into a three-volume novel. Our dear friend, Mrs. Oliphant, would pad any one of them out to that length if she were ordered. No one can write more concisely when she chooses. Nay, I would pad one of them myself, if you would put fifteen months into some passing year."

"You say you invented the plots," said Mrs. Menet, with some hesitation. "Pardon me—if—well, I do not express myself well—I was going to say—"

"Let me express it," said Colonel Ingham. "Our friend understands me better. I was going to say that some of them seem to me to have no plots at all."

Then they all laughed quietly.

"And I do not mean to be rude," said Ingham. "There are plots and plots. I doubt if every short story need to have a plot as elaborate as that of Edwin Drood."

"Well," said Mrs. Menet, "I did not say anything rude, nor did I mean to. But you are helping me. Will you tell me where and how you begin? Mr. Hale says he invented eight plots in an hour. What does he mean?"

"He means this," said the eager colonel. "When that prince of editors, Mr. Perkins—now, alas! far from Sybaris, in San Francisco—once had the goodness to ask me to furnish him for his magazine with six 'short stories,' I naturally assented. Under such a chief it is a privilege to serve."

"And what shall be the titles?" he said.

"Well, I gave him one and another title of things I had planned—notions I had carried perhaps since I was in college. He humored me, and let me talk on; he wrote the names down as I talked, and, after half an hour

of such dreaming, as I rose to go, he said, 'Here are only five stories. Give me the title for the sixth.'

"Well, I had no sixth.

"I looked at the newspaper before me, where the price current for fish was on the first column.

"My eye fell on the word *Pilchards*.

"I said, 'The sixth is *Pilchards*.'

"'*Pilchards* let it be,' said Mr. Perkins—and *Pilchards* it was.

"That day I did not know what a pilchard was.

"But of course it was pleasant to learn.

"I found out where the best pilchards are packed.

"Fortunately for me it is in Cornwall.

"I could cast my story in Cornwall, and I did.

"'What is a picturesque time?' I said. 'Why, Queen Anne's day is a picturesque time. A Queen Anne story will match a Queen Anne sideboard or staircase.'

"So we cast the story in Queen Anne's day.

"We put in a pretty girl in Cornwall, and a fine young man in London, the friend of Addison and Steele.

"We sent a box of pilchards from Cornwall to London. We sent the young man from London to Cornwall.

"There is your story. *Voilà tout*. But no plot, as you observe. And I do not see that any plot is necessary."

"Not necessary, if you please," said Haliburton, "but desirable. If Mr. Perkins had not obliged himself to take six stories from you, possibly he would only have printed five."

"I wish I knew," said the colonel, pensively. "Paul, go bring me the book;" and the colonel sent for the vol-

ume, and did his best to give expression to the story as he read it aloud.

PILCHARDS—A LOVE-STORY.

The little fishing-village which has grown up under the lee of Mount Saint Michael rouses to its most intense life when it pleases the dog-fish that the pilchards shall enter the bay. Whether the pilchards move in a certain fixed line of travel, which the dog-fish have discovered and follow, I do not know ; or whether, on the other hand, the pilchards would stay in some blessed spot, unprovoked by fishermen, undried and unsalted, blushing unseen, indeed, and hidden in remote caves of ocean, were there no dog-fish—this I know not. What I know is this : that, to the blessing of fishermen on the Cornish coast, shoals of pilchards, uncounted and uncountable, appear of a sudden, their silvery fins just flashing above the water in places, in token of wealth to which no sunken argosy of Spanish plate compares. I know that the dog-fish, who is a sort of shark, follows them, apparently to and for their destruction. When they appear, the Cornish fishermen, with their long seines, all ready for their arrival, put out into the bay, and haul in untold thousands, the food for half England, and the wealth of half Cornwall. And, if they did not come thus, this story would never have happened, nor would it ever have been written.

For in a haul of pilchards which is, perhaps, still memorable in the traditions of Mount Saint Michael, so enormous was the yield that it gave, it happened that Mark Trevor, as honest and bold a fisherman as ever rowed his boat out of the Bay of Saint Michael, as he stood up to hail the next boat, and direct the lay of the

heavy seine, stumbled, or had a fit—no man knew or knows—fell heavily over the gunwale, and must have been entangled in the seine. The other boatmen saw him fall ; and, though they risked the whole catch, long John Trevor, and Tregail, the lame man, and young Trelawney pulled to the rescue at once ; and, as soon as that length of the seine could be parted from the next length, it was parted, and with the whole force of the three boats they hauled it in. But it was too late, and they brought poor Mark Trevor's body home stark and dead. He would never draw seine again.

Everybody liked Mark Trevor, and everybody loved his little daughter Peg. She was, before this, the pet of the village ; and because she had no mother she was made to feel that every woman along the shore loved her as her own, and that she was a pet in every hut of them all. And so it happened, that, after a funeral service of more solemnity than these rough children of ogres and of giant-killers were wont to lavish on the dead, it was somehow agreed that Peg should be owned as a sort of child of the regiment ; that she should be cared for as well as the very best of them ; and it came to be a custom that, at the end of every drawing of the long seines, every man, according to the success of the draught of fishes, should bring twenty, or fifty, or even a hundred, of the best of the pilchards which fell to his share, to whichever hut had the charge of their pet child, Peg Trevor ; and these were called " Peg's catch." The fishing lasts on the Cornish shore from July to October. The Cornishmen say that, though the pilehard is the smallest of fish, he feeds the most of men. This is sure, that at Peg's home, before she knew what the value of the free-will offering was, the very best of the catch of Saint Michael's Bay always came together by a

fine law of selection. Before Peg was twenty years old, the superstition of these Cornishmen led them all to believe that the man who put one mean pilehard into Peg's catch would bring bad luck on himself for the next seven years. And Peg's share, being the best of catch of the year by this law of the selection of love, made Peg an independent little woman in her way ; all the more so when Peg herself grew big enough to take oversight and watch of her catch.

Besides the good-will of his neighbors, Mark Trevor had had but little to leave to the orphan-girl except good blood, and good friends, his pretty hut, his boat, and his length of seine. On his little finger, the day his body was brought home dead, was an old-fashioned ring, which, on his wedding-day, he had given to his wife. It was not her wedding-ring ; but she wore it above her wedding-ring, as a guard, after a fashion of those days—a queer, old-fashioned ring, with a great garnet in the middle ; and round this ring this pilehard story grows. The ring was preciousy saved among Peg's belongings ; and as the girl grew up, and knew it was her mother's ring, she was fond of looking at it, and at last took to wearing it herself, when she became a woman ; not, for fairness' sake be it said, from any love of finery, but because they said there was a spell in garnets. “ Anywise there would be luck in what her mother wore ; ” and so for “ luck she would wear it.” So said the merry, good-hearted, fearless girl.

And when, one day, after a hard day's work, the ring was lost, and nobody remembered to have seen the ring since breakfast, poor Peg was a little dashed. She went to bed crying, indeed. But the next morning all was right again. She said so, and I believe it was so. “ No need to make salt when your boat's at sea,” said she.

“ No need to cry for an addled egg,” said she. “ If the hand is clean, the ring makes it no cleaner,” said she. For Peg had a world of Cornish proverbs, which she could bring to bear on her side of whatever argument, and her side was always the cheery and jolly and hopeful and brave side ; for the girl was as hearty as her father was before her, and she made the best therefore of what was to her indeed a very happy world.

If the reader really cares to know what became of this ring, it will be easy enough to tell him. It would not be hard to tell him its history from that day to this day, nor whose finger the garnet is on at this moment, unless, indeed, it have just now gone to Starr & Mortimer’s, or to Mr. Ruby’s, or to Guild’s, to be set anew. The ring turned up in Anthony Skene’s chambers in the New Inn in London.

Anthony Skene had been at work all that winter day in the most important cause that had ever been confided to him. Something had turned the attention of one of the great lords of the law to this young fellow, as he sat on the back seat among the young lawyers, with a very fresh wig and a very fresh gown ; and this something had made the great lord direct the man of all work in this very important matter of *A* in appeal *vs.* *Z* to call in Master Anthony Skene when the great lord had been told that they should need more force before that work was done. No, I am not going to tell you the story of the great case of *A vs. Z* ; that is a trick of the novelists ; I am only going to tell what happened to Anthony Skene when he came home to his chambers after that great day of work, when, first of all, he had been introduced to the great lord of the law, and then had gone to work as bidden, all day long, well into the evening,

examining witnesses in advance, and seeing what they could say, and what they would say, from what they would be frightened, and on what points they would be sure. Anthony Skene came home to his chambers not displeased with himself. But never had his chambers seemed so forlorn. They were warm. Mrs. Godkin had the fire all right. Nay, they were light. She was bidden to light the candles at seven ; and she had lighted them. But they were so lonely ! Anthony Skene thought of the pleasant home in Hampshire, and of his mother and father, of his sister Hetty, and of the boys. He kicked off his boots, and he put on his slippers ; and he felt as if he would like to cut his throat, he was so lonely. The tea-kettle was simmering on the hob, as Mrs. Godkin had left it, and as it was always left at seven o'clock. But the mere comparison of the loneliness and cheerlessness of the place with the home-feeling of the Hampshire hob, where his mother's teakettle was simmering, made Anthony Skene more wretched ; and, as he looked at the tea-kettle, he swore a sorry oath. On a table at one side were muffins, and a tea-canister, a cup, saucer, and spoon, with a few lumps of sugar, a bit of butter, and a bit of cheese. And as Anthony Skene remembered the good cheer at his father's house, and who there were at that moment round his father's table, and how surely they were talking of him, he swore another sorry oath, because he was so lonely. The chambers were good enough chambers ; but poor Anthony Skene felt more forlorn than ever.

None the less did he make his cup of tea, and set the saucer upon it, after the fashion of those days. And he toasted a muffin, and buttered it ; but still the bachelor meal seemed to him, nay, was, very forlorn. And so it was that he said to himself that he would open the box

of pilchards which his client, John Holt, had sent him with his last retaining-fee. Pilchards were usually packed in hogsheads ; but sometimes a man in business knew where to find a choice "lot" put up with much more care in a long box, just as wide as the pilchards were long, much, indeed, as the reader may see herrings packed to-day. And such a box had the faithful and admiring John Holt sent to his faithful counsellor, Anthony Skene.

Anthony Skene took down from its nail a little hatchet, with which, with his own hands, he split the wood that kindled his coal. He opened the box, and picked out two pilchards, that he might toast them also over the fire. As he lifted them from the box, something sparkled and fell. He found it on the floor. It was a garnet ring. The reader, of course, sees that it was Peg Trevor's garnet ring.

Anthony Skene warmed the pilchards, toasted them through. One of them took fire, but was extinguished easily ; and, though a little smoked, it added to the cheer of the simple meal. Anthony Skene made himself another cup of tea. He set aside the tray for Mrs. Godkin to make all clean in the morning, and then found for himself a bottle of choice old port, still half full. He brought this out, with a daintily-cut glass, one of six, which had been his father's gift to him. He drew up a second chair for his feet ; he lighted his pipe ; he blew curls of smoke into the air, and watched them as they twisted, expanded, and broke. He swore no more sorry oaths. No ; he was more cheerful, because he was more comfortable. But all the time he played with the garnet ring. And he fancied fancies, and he dreamed dreams, that found their centre in the garnet ring. And so, when the pipe was out, and when two

glasses were out of the bottle, and he corked it resolutely, and set it back in the cupboard, Anthony Skene said aloud, "I will ask the woman that wore that ring to marry me ; and if she says ' Yes,' I will never live in these —— chambers more." I am sorry to say that, as he spoke of the chambers, he denounced them by a word which gentlemen use no longer.

Anthony Skene was a good lawyer, a high-toned gentleman, a rising man too, as the men of Queen Anne's court said ; but he was an impulsive fellow ; and, when he took the bit between his teeth, it was no common curb that hindered him, until some other fancy crossed his way.

This is what happened to the ring. But what I am to tell is what happened to Anthony Skene. Not in that celebrated case of *A in error vs. Z* ; for that you may look in the Reports of the IX., X., and XI. Annæ Reg. Middl. Is it not all written there ? Long before *A* and *Z* had settled, or had been settled, the leading events happened to Anthony Skene, which are now to be written down.

The summer term of *X* year was well over, and Anthony Skene, like all other men in chambers, had earned his long vacation. He told Mrs. Godkin that he should not be back for six weeks. He packed his little round horseman's valise, after the fashion of that time. Into a leather belt, after another fashion of the time, he put thirty of Queen Anne's guineas ; and, in the most secret compartment of this belt, he placed a little vellum packet, in the heart of which was the garnet ring. Thus equipped, he rode to his father's house in Hampshire ; and there, with his father and mother, with all the brother and sister Skenes as well, and with all the pretty

neighbors, and all the gay young men of his earlier life, he made holiday for the rest of that week. There was a pretty Lucy Savage there, who was the very nearest friend of Sarah Skene; and Sarah Skene certainly had schemes which involved Lucy Savage and Anthony both. And Anthony certainly did flirt a little with Lucy Savage, to whom, indeed, he had brought a copy of Mr. Gay's last volume from town. But this is the way with young people, and must be excused even with barristers in chambers, though they carry hidden garnet rings.

When the Monday came, in spite of all solicitation to the contrary, Anthony Skene tore himself away. There was rather a tender scene at old Savage's on Sunday evening, when young Mr. Skene made his good-bys there. And his old father could not understand why he must leave so soon. But leave he did. "Business in the West," he said, as he had said when he arrived. And the girls thought it so grand that their brother should have important business which could not be spoken of, and must hardly be alluded to, that they were almost compensated for losing their brother by that mystery. His father would not hear to his going off on the horse he had bought in London, but mounted him on the best roadster in his own stable; and so Master Anthony departed, after a tearful breakfast, on the "important business." This business was, as it may be hoped the reader has guessed, to learn what was the history of the garnet ring. For this purpose Anthony had armed himself with letters from great London fish-mongers, to all parties of consequence in their line in Cornwall. And he had, hidden away in the round portmanteau, the painted end of the box of pilchards, which he had opened in his chambers on that fatal evening.

The journey was not without adventure ; but the adventures shall not be here described. Anthony was a bit of a politician ; and he was not sorry to see the points which were then famous to liberal-minded Englishmen lovers of the “ glorious memory,” from their connection with the landings of William and of Monmouth. But he wasted no time in studying history. He jogged on and on, after the fashion of those days, and dreamed, as after the fashion of all days, on what manner of finger it might be that this quaint ring now so near his heart had rested on, and what manner of woman she might be to whom that little finger belonged, and what manner of home it might be which he was going to ask her to leave, and what manner of nest that might be to which he should ask her to come. For Anthony Skene was as young as you and I are (though all this was a hundred and seventy years ago), and could dream with the dreamiest of us all. And yet, all of a sudden, the dream broke short, very short. Anthony had still near three days’ journey before him, for he had not yet entered Cornwall, and was just crossing a little bridge, which may, I believe, still be seen in Tavistock, when the noble horse he rode started as if he had been shot, whinnied as if in agony, tried to run, but run in a halting gait, which Anthony did not understand, and then stopped short in answer to his master’s direction, and stood stock still, only trembling and snorting still, as if in pain. Anthony dismounted in an instant, and in an instant more found the cause of sorrow. In a bit of woodwork on the bridge a vicious nail had turned upward, which the poor creature’s foot had struck ; the iron had pierced into the quick, and blood was already flowing from the wound. Anthony was farrier enough to withdraw the nail in a moment ; but the poor horse,

who showed gratitude in a dozen pretty signs, was wretchedly lame.

Anthony led him back to the snug little inn which he had left but five minutes before, and held converse with the landlord. The man had a gray roadster whom he was fain to let Anthony take for the rest of the journey. But after Anthony had looked at this beast he determined that he had rather go on to Cornwall, and hunt up the lady of his dreams on foot, than ride on such a jade. After he had declined the horse, and not till then, his host told him that John Twitchell, a very decent Cornishman, who had been a carrier on the London road for many years, would pass the house the next morning on his way to Plymouth; that John's cart was a light covered cart on springs, with a good span of horses; that behind John's seat was a shaded seat, where he was always glad to take up decent people; and that, in short, Master Skene could go forward thus to Plymouth, if he chose. And, as he did choose, so it was ordered.

What was not explained to Anthony was of much more importance than what was explained. As he sat the next day in the common room of the inn waiting for John Twitchell, after his breakfast, a gay party of young people came riding down to the inn, one of whom, a gray-eyed, brown-haired, cherry-checked girl of twenty, was to be, as it proved, Anthony Skene's companion in John Twitchell's taxed cart. "Taxed cart" we should call it, had this been after the days of William Pitt. And this merry, laughing party had come down from the squire's to bid the pretty girl good-by. It was clear enough that the adventure of the day's journey was a frolic to each and all of them. There was much sympathy on the part of the hosts whom she was leaving,

and a thousand regrets and expressions of mortification that they should send her off so inhospitably. On the other hand, there was much joking, on her part, of her power over John Twitchell, and his devotion to her. She pretended she had rather ride in his cart than in the carriage of any lady of the land ; and as for going to Plymouth on horseback, when she could go under the shelter of the canvas of her friend John, it would have been absurd. Altogether the whole party mystified Mr. Anthony Skene in his retirement not a little ; nor did one of them all pay him the compliment of looking on him with a look, far less of speaking to him with a word. None the less did he see—O Lucy Savage ! O garnet ring !—that the little woman who was the pet of all this admiration and tenderness was the loveliest creature he had ever set his eyes upon.

John Twitchell came ; and, fortunately for all concerned, John Twitchell had no passengers. The unknown beauty recognized John good-naturedly, and he recognized her with devotion. Every possible care was lavished on the little lady's box and her several dainty parcels. John Twitchell put something under her feet, and something else behind her back ; and it was only at the last moment that the least attention was paid to Mr. Anthony Skene of the New Inn, who was waiting to take passage also. Then he was hurried in ; and, as he blessed his stars for such fair companionship, they started on their way.

The journey to Plymouth is but twenty-two miles ; and with John Twitchell's horses, even with all the delays of John Twitchell's duties and position, they were sure to arrive before three in the afternoon. Mr. Skene was far too well bred to obtrude himself on the young gentlewoman—if she were a gentlewoman—whom kind

fate had placed so near him. He began, very carefully, with John Twitchell, and made himself as agreeable with him as he knew how. He talked to the lady—if she were a lady—through John Twitchell, so to speak ; and watched all the time for one attention or another, which he might show to her, which might not be obtrusive, but such as a gentleman might offer without offence to the noblest lady of the land. Fortunately for him in this business, Anthony Skene was a gentleman. In the nobler and larger use of the word, John Twitchell was another ; and he would have wrung Master Skene's neck for him, had he by sign or word offended the pretty young lady who sat behind the carter. So she was quite safe from any possible annoyance, even to her timidity ; and so, of course, it happened that, before an hour was past, they were all three on excellent terms, and the barriers between their stations and hers were all comfortably broken down.

Any question as to the young lady's name was so far solved as this, that John Twitchell called her " Miss Waring ;" and it appeared that she was going to her aunt, Mrs. Waring, in Plymouth. It was while John watered his horses at a wayside trough, and while Mr. Skene and Miss Waring walked on up the long hill together, that the talk of the two young people first became brisk and animated. But the day was too lovely, and they too cheerful, for it to be stiff very long ; and they really chatted as if they had been old friends.

" Oh, no !" said she, laughing. " It frightens me to think of going to London. Plymouth here is quite wonderful enough for a country lass like me." He had asked her if she had ever seen London.

" Is not Plymouth your home, then ?"

" Yes and no," said she. Was she playing with him

the least bit in the world? and was she determined that he should tell her everything about himself, while he learned nothing about her? "I am so much at home with my dear old aunt, whom I am going to, that it would be wicked to say that Plymouth was not home. That is one answer. But Plymouth is a great city, for all that; and I am only a country girl."

He longed to ask what her aunt's name was, and to find out what her station was; but he did not dare. He did say, "Is the life in Plymouth gay?"

"Gay? Gay to gay people, I dare say. It is very nice life to me. But I only see the gay people when I go to church, and see them as they stream in there." And here she burst into uncontrollable laughter; but she said, "I was going to tell you how badly I behaved to some of Aunt Susan's gay friends; but it will not do to tell you that story. Yet, no. I dare say a young gentleman like you will find Plymouth gay. My life is very quiet there."

"Then you have some time to read. I should like to lend you the last *Spectators*."

She looked round really gratefully. "Would you indeed, just for a day? That is very kind. My aunt has a good many; oh, she has twenty! But she has not had one for two, no for three months;" and so they fell to talking of the *Spectator*.

Anthony Skene was in no sort a snob; but when he said that he knew by sight all the gentlemen who wrote in the *Spectator*, that he had shaken hands with Mr. Steele, and had dined with Lord Fairfax, and described very pleasantly Fairfax's talk about the paper which was then the town talk, he recommended himself very decidedly to his pretty friend, and she was much more disposed to lead him on to tell of the town and of its won-

ders. They were very good friends indeed when John Twitchell overtook them, and took them under cover once again.

Arrived at Plymouth, Mr. Skene's curiosity was satisfied ; for John Twitchell, before he delivered a box or a parcel, had driven round into Queen Street, and left his pretty charge at the door of Mistress Waring. Now, Mistress Waring proved to be the mistress of a well-to-do shop on a principal street of Plymouth—a shop which, though they had no plate windows in those days, and though there was no sign of any sort, contained almost everything which the neighborhood, rather than the people, of Plymouth, might be supposed to want. Mrs. Waring, and a stout apprentice, and a frightened servant attended the shop, which was parted from the street by a half door. The good woman welcomed her niece with the undisguised admiration with which every one welcomed her, stepping plumply in front of poor Anthony, who had hoped for the pleasure of giving his hand to the young lady as she stepped from the carriage, or, perhaps, even lifting her from its heights. Mrs. Waring left him to himself, took the girl in both her hands, and tenderly lifted her to the step of the shop, kissed her on both cheeks, and loudly expressed her joy. Her niece kissed her in return, turned to bid John Twitchell good-by, gave her hand frankly to Mr. Skene, and said to her aunt, "This gentleman has been very kind to me."

Mrs. Waring looked up amazed, unconscious of his existence till now, and asked the puzzling question, "What is his name, my dear?"

But alas ! no one could introduce Anthony ; and he was fain to say himself that he was Mr. Skene ; and added, with a Londoner's pride, "from London." The

words did not help him with Mrs. Waring. She thanked him for his courtesy to her charge with some state, and then hustled that young lady, her box and parcels, into the shop ; and Mr. Anthony was left to remount the carrier's wagon alone.

It must be confessed that the hours between eight and three had proved enough to cure him of any immediate determination to press his journey into Cornwall. The garnet ring was of much less consequence to him since he had had these hours of pleasant, unaffected talk with this pleasant, unaffected girl. Mr. Skene ordered his dinner and ate it, looked out his roll of new *Spectators*, put them in a neat parcel, and directed them in his best, to "Miss Waring, with the respects of A. Skene," and then, having planned out his campaign for that day and for the next day, started to make the best use he might of what was left of the afternoon and evening. Nor was he so unsuccessful. He had bidden John Twitchell take him to the inn where the judge and bar made their home, and, among the counsel who rode that circuit, he had found one or two acquaintances. A young London lawyer of as good reputation as he had no difficulty in obtaining an introduction, even to the judge ; and so Anthony Skene, having doffed his travelling gear, and donned such walking gear as the portmanteau furnished, started on his mission with his base well secured. He was a little amused himself, and a little annoyed, to find himself going to make court to a Plymouth shopkeeper. But he did not flinch for that. And he knew very well that, if he was to see the young lady again, he must make himself agreeable to the old one. He was not the first nor the last young man who has found himself in the same position.

He walked modestly into the shop, and asked the

stupid apprentice to show him some silk handkerchiefs, examined with care those that appeared, praised the quality of the best, and laid two or three one side. Then he asked for the best riding-gloves ; and by this time Mrs. Waring, who had scented the customer from afar, could not resist, and herself interposed, sending Sam to duty for which he was more fitted.

“ Limerick ? Yes, sir ; those I know are Limerick. But we call these as good ; they are sewed to my own order.”

“ Indeed they are, indeed they are,” said the skilful Anthony. “ I cannot buy such in London. The mercers will cheat me there. Only three shillings you say ; let me have four pair, Mrs. Waring.”

Mrs. Waring was well-nigh captured then ; and with a few more skilful purchases, and a few even more skilful compliments, Martin Anthony had made of her a slave. Should she not send the parcel home for him ?

“ Yes, no, yes.” She might send them to the Three Bells. Was the Three Bells the best house ? He had gone there because the rest of the bar were there, and his lordship.

“ Oh, yes, sir, it is ! Well, the Crown is a good house. The bishop sometimes stays at the Crown ; but, as the bar and the judges always do go to the Three Bells, of course a gentleman is more at ease with his friends.” Had he been at this circuit before ?

No, Mr. Skene had never been on this circuit before ; was not going to join the circuit now, but had some business that would keep him in Plymouth a few days. Could Mrs. Waring name to him a good shoemaker ? Of course she could ; and so on, and so on, and so on, until, when, at the end of fifteen minutes, Mr. Skene said he had a few new *Spectators* which Mrs. Waring

had not seen perhaps, and which he had promised to bring to her niece, that lady, without the least hesitation, begged him to come into her own parlor, and without the least hesitation called the pretty traveller downstairs. She was surprised and was pleased to see her companion so soon, gave him her hand cordially, and said so, and thanked him most heartily for the new *Spectators*. And so they fell to talking just in the easiest way in the world ; and Anthony told to Mrs. Waring his little stories of Mr. Addison and Mr. Dick Steele and Lord Fairfax. And then he told other stories about Dr. Sacheverell and my Lord Marlborough ; and, finding Mrs. Waring had ecclesiastical interests, was glad to tell an anecdote or two of Archbishop Tillotson, and, in short, made himself very agreeable. It was with very little fuss that Mrs. Waring got the frightened Mary to put a third plate, a third tea-cup, and a third saucer on the little table ; so that with perfect ease, when the kettle boiled, and was brought in hissing, the good woman could ask Mr. Skene, whom she always called " Mr. Skee," if he would not join them at tea. Ah me ! little need to press Mr. Anthony. And as they draw up to the table, and as Mrs. Waring opens the little tea-canister, which happens to be the very twin of his in the dismal chambers at New Inn, how readily does Mr. Anthony's thought, in this new-born comfort, go back to think of the dismalnesses of those chambers ! Woe's me ! does he think as well of the garnet ring and the dream that led him so far ? I think not. I am afraid there is the least reflection, that if poor Hengist, the roan horse, must go lame, he was glad he had gone lame at Tavistock. Where would Master Anthony be just now but for that unfortunate nail ?

Well, it was well-nigh ten o'clock before he had told

all his stories, and had listened to Mrs. Waring's, his fair companion not displeased at the good sense which that lady showed as she took her part in the conversation, but for herself not speaking so much or so often as Master Anthony might have desired. At ten he withdrew, but had skilfully engaged the ladies to go with him to the assizes to-morrow, that he might find for them a good place, where they might see the trial of Black Will and the Dartmoor bruiser, two notorious highwaymen, who had even attacked Lord Penrhyn in his carriage, and were now likely to hang for it. Anthony had learned that Lady Penrhyn and the bishop's wife were to be at the trial, and both his hostesses were pleased indeed to be invited to assist at it in such good company. And to the trial they went together.

And so on, and so on, and so on. The young lady's visit to Plymouth lasted a fortnight, and the young man's business detained him in Plymouth a fortnight too. Every morning he would keep up the pretence of occupation, by going to the docks, and by spending an hour in listening to the trials as they went on ; but every day, once at least, and oftener more than once, he would present himself at the Widow Waring's to fulfil some appointment which had been made the day before. Not that they went every day to see highwaymen arraigned. But there were the blessed Sundays, of course Mr. Skene must go to church ; there was an excursion to Fleet House ; there was a sail in the bay ; ah ! there is always enough to do where there is a lovely girl, and a wide-awake young man, and a duenna aunt not unwilling.

No, this story is not to tell what he said to her, or she said to him, as that fortnight sped. This story, as you

know, is all about pilehards. Nor, indeed, do the family notes in my hand tell what they said to each other, day after day, after the highwaymen were well arraigned. Fill out the blanks for yourselves, dear young friends who have followed the story so far ; for me, all I can tell or will tell is what happened when the last day of the fortnight came.

Anthony Skene was well persuaded, long before this time, that the quest for the lady of the ring was like a quest of the Round Table knights—the shadow of a dream. He had found here the queen of that ideal home of his, if only she would reign there ; and, if not, never should any queen sit on that vacant throne. The spirit and balance and cheeriness of this lovely girl were something wholly new to Anthony, certainly something which he had never seen among the finical girls in London, who let him take them to the play-house sometimes, nor among the Hampshire girls, who came and went with his sisters, who could only flirt, but who had so little to say. Poor Lucy Savage, she was not well treated ! In truth, his new flame had had an independent sort of life, and, with one and another of these relatives in this out-of-the-way corner of England, had been thrown in with books, with chances to read them, and advisers who put her up to reading them ; which books to this hour are the best reading for a hearty girl or for a manly boy. Thus she knew Comus by heart, and half the rest of Milton. She would sing you Shakespeare's songs, and Ben Jonson's and Herrick's, in a simple way that made the tears run down your cheeks. She believed in Sir Roger de Coverley more than she did in the Rev. Mr. Gripe the parson ; and she had a straightforward way of telling you what she believed, and what she did not believe, such as none of Anthony's other flames had ever

had. And Anthony was man enough to see and know and feel and understand that here was such a woman as he had never seen before, nor would be likely to see again. Whether she had for him any share, even the slightest, of the overmastering passion which he had for her, he did not know ; but he knew he could find out, and, like a brave man as he was, he knew no time was like this time. How he could get at her, or if he could get at her, in this home to which she was returning, he did not know. He could come at her here.

So Sunday afternoon, her last day in Plymouth, as they walked home from church together, decorously following Mrs. Waring, as she walked before with her neighbor, Mr. Willard, the calender, Anthony Skene told his pretty companion that he loved her better than he loved himself, and asked her to be his wife.

The girl did not start ; but she did not speak. She tried to speak once ; she tried to speak again ; and it was only when he urged her to say something, that she found life and nerve to say :

“ Mr. Skene, you do not know what you are saying. To begin with, you do not know whom you are talking to.”

“ I know I am talking to the loveliest woman in England, the only woman I ever loved, or ever shall love ; and that it is she I beg to marry me.”

“ You are talking to a fisherman’s daughter—you who are a gentleman’s son.”

“ If I were talking to Simon Peter’s daughter,” said Anthony, ingeniously, “ I could only say what I have said—that my life is yours to make it what you will ; my home is your home, though for years it must be a poor one ; my heart is your heart, and I know that it is an honest one. Dear Mistress Margaret, do not throw that away.”

“Mr. Skene,” said the girl, now pale with emotion, but still keeping boldly on in the way, without faltering in her step, “you do not know that this fisherman’s daughter works herself for her daily bread. This hand you ask for will be on Thursday morning sorting out the large fish from the smaller ones, and laying them in boxes for the market.”

The inspiration of love, or the inspiration of genius, lighted on Anthony; are they not both the same? He boldly took the little hand which she held up to him, and slipped on it the garnet ring, and said, “And that is the ring which I would place on it, if you will let me.”

Lucky for Meg Trevor that they were in the Curl Alley, which crosses from the High Street into Queen’s Street, and that no one could see her. She started this time, and trembled so that she really needed Skene’s arm that she might stand. She looked on the ring and on him, with wonder and through tears.

“It is my mother’s ring; I lost it this day twelve-month.”

“It is your ring,” said he, reverently. “I found it this day six month.” And he told her where he found it, how he found it, and he told her the vow he made when he found it, and how far on his journey to Cornwall the vow had brought him.

“And then—and then you abandoned your heart’s love, you abandoned the lady of the ring, because you met a little girl in a cart one day! Oh, Anthony Skene, I am ashamed of you!” For the girl was in the reaction now, and could laugh. But Anthony could not laugh; he was graver than ever.

“No, dearest; but because it was written in the heaven above that I should love you, and you only, with all my mind and heart and soul and strength.”

And the laugh was over on her lips, and she was very pale. And her hand fell back in his hand ; and her eye struggled up and met his eye, and the whole was told ; and his lip met her lip, and the garnet ring never left her finger again.

They turned back into High Street, and they walked back past the church again, and out into the fields. Yes, the sun was setting when they came into the Widow Waring's house ; and Anthony Skene asked her blessing, which blessing she gave.

Margaret Waring Trevor started for Saint Michael's Bay on the Monday, as she had said she would ; and on the Thursday, just as she had done for many years, with her own hands she sorted out the number one pilchards of " Peg's catch " from the number twos, and with her own hands arranged them in the neat boxes which her own wit had contrived, and her own forethought ordered — boxes which already had the name of containing the very best cured pilchards of the very best catch of the season. On the Friday a young London lawyer appeared at Michael's Bay, inquiring about the catch, and where a man could buy pilchards best ; and on the Friday afternoon he was making a visit in Peg Trevor's pretty little cottage, to the amazement of old Goody Tremaine, who took care of it and Peg together. But that year was the last year that Peg ever packed pilchards with her own hand.

This is the story of the garnet ring, so far as it has to do with pilchards.

There is an inevitable awkward pause after the best reading of a story by the author. Colonel Ingham broke this himself :

“As the average story goes, for the average reader, I think that is well enough. But, as I said, it has no plot. A man meets a woman and falls in love with her. How can he help himself? That is all, as I said before.”

“Colonel Ingham, you shall not laugh at it!” This was Mrs. Menet’s kind reply. “It is a very pretty story, and we are much obliged to you.”

“Pretty, if you please,” said Haliburton, who was in his critical vein, “but it is very improbable. It is all improbable.”

“Thank you, thank you,” said the colonel. “You remind me of what I meant to say—and forgot. Mr. Hale hinted at it. The short story differs from the long novel in that very point—it may be improbable, and no harm is done. Now, the long novel must, on the whole, hold up the mirror to nature. But, when we tell each other stories as we eat our walnuts, we generally choose *extraordinary* things to tell. So with printed short stories.

“There is a story I once wrote about ‘My Double.’ One of the Boston papers said that was improbable. It certainly was. I am by no means sure that such interest as it has did not spring from that fact.

“I have written other stories, as I ought to say, which were severely criticised because they were too probable. But people are hard to please.”

CHAPTER VI.

“WHY does Ruth Lindsay’s name sound familiar to me?”

This was Mrs. Fréchette’s question to Mrs. Menet the next morning as the ladies sat in the library after breakfast. The men were scattered everywhere.

“Ruth Lindsay? Who is Ruth Lindsay?”

“Don’t you remember? She is that poor girl who listened, like Fine-ears, at the ground, and heard more than was good for her.” So said Mrs. Fréchette.

“More than was good for her!” cried Anna Haliburton. “It was the luckiest thing in the world for Ruth. How you would like her! One of the most lovable people I know; and it is such a mercy she was well rid of that tramp.”

“Do you mean,” said Mrs. Fréchette, “that you know the girl? I thought Mr. Ingham—Colonel Ingham—made her up.”

“My dear child, I am long ago a perfect Berkeleyn. I feel as if we made it all up as we go along. If you can meet Ruth Byram, and see her pretty baby, you will think they are very flesh-and-blood sort of people.”

“Byram? It is Ruth Lindsay I am talking of.”

“Do you suppose as nice a Lindsay as that stays ‘Lindsay’ forever? Oh, my child, many a heart is caught in the rebound! Though, for that matter, Ruth was good at choosing. They say Ernest Byram had to ask her twice.”

“George wrote out the whole story, and it is in *Harper’s*. That is why you thought the name familiar, Mrs. Fréchette.”

Mrs. Fréchette nodded assent, but Mrs. Menet had never heard it ; and as Anna Haliburton said they would certainly meet the Lindsays when they went up to town the volume was produced, and Mrs. Fréchette read the story of the courtship aloud to the others.

LAW AND GOSPEL.

I.—CHOICE.

“Head, I win ; tail, you lose,” said young Byram, speaking aloud, though he was alone.

He was walking up and down in his pretty room in Lafayette College. He had finished his last examination—nay, his last rehearsal before the final exhibition. His trunks were packed for his departure the next day, after the public services. His carpet was sold, and his furniture given away. Everything was determined, except—
—Except that most difficult and delicate question, what he should do next.

He held in his hand a letter from his father, who was in Munich, with all the rest of the family. His father had written :

“ . . . I sympathize with you in your difficulties. I felt like difficulties at your age. But you are a man now, and a man must make a man’s choice. You have one adviser better than I am or your mother. Consult Him, and you will not come out wrong. Indeed, even if your mother had an eager wish in the matter, she would not wish to govern you ; nor would I.

“Only decide. Decide—and decide within twenty-

four hours after you receive this note. You will have the same credit at Munroe's as you have had. If you need more, write and say so."

College graduates will now understand that poor young Byram was in that slough of despond which so many men have sunk in—perhaps as many as have pulled through. His college life was ended, and he was "choosing his profession."

It was in this stress—in the doubt between the life of a minister and that of a lawyer—that Byram cried aloud in his agony,

"Head, I win ; tail, you lose."

For he held in his hand an old Queen Anne half-penny. His grandmother had given it to him long ago, and he had kept it as a sort of luck-penny. He snapped it in the air. Britannia should be Justice, and the Queen should be Mercy. "Urim and Thummim," he had just time to cry, when the halfpenny fell in the back of his easy-chair. It rested on its edge—neither side up—between the cushion and the mahogany.

"Destiny itself will not decide for me," cried poor Byram. "Why should I do what destiny will not do?" And he sat at his desk and finished the letter to his father which lay there waiting his determination.

"P.S.—I have your kind letter from Munich. I have determined to go to Harvard to-morrow, and to enter there next week."

Thus did the wretched lad postpone for a wretched week the last decision. For at Harvard there is not only a School of Law, but a Divinity School. And this young Byram well knew.

II.—INDECISION.

To Harvard accordingly he went. On the Fall River boat he met three or four gentlemen, one of whom was an old friend of his father's, who introduced him to the others. First they walked together, then they sat and talked. The talk fell on their professional experiences. All of them were at the bar. Now they rallied each other; now they talked seriously; now they fell to telling anecdotes of Kent, and Shaw, and Story, and Gray; and now in the merriest and now in the gravest vein dropped hints, which Byram treasured, of the blessings which an upright lawyer might scatter for mankind. They all turned in at ten o'clock. And as Byram wound his watch and crept into his berth, he felt that the evening had been providentially appointed. He would enter at the Law School as soon as he had taken his room and furnished it.

To the cares of furniture and carpets, accordingly, he gave Saturday; was so far forward at night that he could sleep on his new mattress, and on Sunday walked into Boston to make his first studies of the quaint old city. It happened that, in a sight-seer's fancy, he drifted with the throng into a little church in the outskirts of the town. From the title-page of the hymn-book he learned that he was with a branch of the vine in whose service he had never joined before. A frank, cheerful preacher took his place in the pulpit, and before five minutes had passed Byram forgot that he was a stranger. Hymns, Scripture, prayers, sermon, fitted in each with each, all governed, clearly enough, by the impulse of one eager purpose. Byram felt as if he were listening to the talk of an old companion. He never asked if this were oratory or no; he did not test the

argument of the speaker ; he followed him eagerly, and could only wonder, when he stopped, why he did so. It happened that Byram sat in the very front of the crowded church. Perforce he waited a little in the open space before the communion table after the service was over. It happened that the preacher, almost in haste, ran down to speak to a little girl after the benediction, so that Byram stood close by him, and said to him, "I thank you for what you said, and I wish you had said more."

And then he started, frightened with his own courage.

But the other laughed, and said : " That is our besetting danger, you know. And really nothing on earth can be equal to the temptation of going on when one's audience listens. There is no such exquisite pleasure." A lady touched him on the shoulder, saying, " Excuse me for interrupting you," and he turned away. The congregation was melting away, and Byram followed them.

He walked to Cambridge, haunted by the single thought that this man was as eager in his profession, and as happy in it, as those lawyers had been in theirs. And surely it was worth a man's while. Here were five or six hundred people who had drunk in eagerly every word that man had said. And Byram knew from his own experience that they were going home with higher purposes. It was worth while.

The next morning he had an interview with the dean of the Divinity College, and in the afternoon an interview with the dean of the Law School.

It ended as with such men such conflicts are apt to end. Byram found that in the broad arrangements of Harvard University there are many lines of study which a student in either school may well attend. He found

that at Divinity Hall they would receive him, if he pleased, as a "special student." True, he would thus be apt to forfeit his chance for a bachelor's degree. But in the attendance on the branches he chose he would gain some insight into the line of study proposed. As for the Law School, he would have to pass its examinations from time to time. But, day by day, little precise attendance was there required. And so the undecided young man determined, if this could be called a determination, that he would enter at both schools till he could make a choice by practical experiment in which calling he was most at home. Almost carelessly, that he might not be bothered by unnecessary questions, he entered as George E. Byram at the Law School, and G. Ernest Byram at the other. These were his names. He was always called Ernest at home. At college he was known as George. College boys seldom inquire what is a young man's home name.

III.—EXPERIMENT.

Not one thought of deceit had crossed Byram's mind when he entered his name by one initial and one name in one school, and by reversing these in the other. He did not mean to deceive professors or registrars. He took it for granted, indeed, used as he was to smaller circles, that his presence at Cambridge was already a matter known to the authorities. It simply occurred to him that he should save no end of questions by the registration he had chosen. He knew his indecision was unusual ; and he shrunk with a provincial shyness from the annunciation which he thought possible, even in the public journals, that one gentleman was studying for two professions. He knew so little that he did not suspect,

first, that no journal would mention the fact, and second, that nobody would read the mention if it did.

Nor was it with any intention to deceive that it happened that he adopted a graver costume for what he came to call Divinity days, differing from the somewhat flamboyant vests, walking coats, and trousers which he wore on the days when, as it happened, most of his time was spent at Dane Hall. He was not a ritualist, but a person who respected harmony in costume. It was quite natural to him, in a school where many of his fellow-students were poor men, to abstain from any loud or costly display in dress. Most of the Divinity men wore black or gray, and with them Byram did the same. But he had his old clothes ; they must be worn at some time. And so it happened—for he was regular in his habits—that on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, when he spent most of his time at Divinity Hall, he was always dressed in full black ; while on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at the Law School, his trousers were of one color and his coat of another. A black silk stove-pipe hat belonged with the black coat, and a reddish-gray Derby with the gayer apparel.

It need hardly be said that the young fellow enjoyed his studies at both schools. The law of selection worked as it will. He could not but elect in each ; and naturally he elected what was most agreeable to him in each, while he rejected, without knowing it, the lines of study which would have cost him much labor. It was not long before he found out how closely the Common Law doctrines are interwoven with the religious conscience of a Christian people, and in his studies of ecclesiastical history nothing fascinated him so much as the relations of the Church of the Empire with the foundation of the Civil Law. The fearless discussion of first principles

among the Cambridge Divinity students gave him a sway which hardly any fellow-student had in the more technical debates of the clubs in the Law School ; and, on the other hand, the precision of statement of the Law professors, and of the abler men among his fellows at Dane Hall, gave him habits which became resources very little known among the rhetorical and voluble part of the conversationists at Divinity. The careful training for public speech of a Divinity student made Byram a favorite in the debating clubs of the Law School, while the logical analysis of his subject, and the vigorous dissection of his adversary, made him, for the moment, the master in what was then called the " Philanthropic Society " of young divines. So far—well. He had not to reprove himself for wasting time.

Only one thing surprised him. Although he came to be on terms of conversational acquaintance with his teachers—visiting, indeed, at the houses of some of them—no one of them ever alluded to his double course.

Could it be that, in the pressure of their duties, they did not know he had undertaken it ?

IV.—INTRODUCTION.

It was a woman who revealed to young Byram the awkwardness of the step he had taken. That there was duplicity in it he knew ; it was duplicity, and nothing else. But at first, because he had saved verbal deception, and had kept literally within the letter, he had tried to persuade himself that for once the duplicity was not to be blamed. He did no one any harm, he said to himself. It was nobody's business where he studied, except his father's, and he had, of course, notified his father of his arrangements. For the rest, it amused him to see how often his friends of the moot-court cut him

dead on his Divinity days, and how the theological professors, in their turn, passed him without recognition when they met him in checked trousers and a loud corduroy hunting coat. He had found it most convenient not to take his meals at any of the public tables, but to make one of the simple family of the widow in whose house he had taken rooms. Not that he was unsocial. He was fond of company. And at first he was afraid he had made a mistake in secluding himself, merely for convenience, at the three meals, which are, after all, in all forms of civilization, the three special altar services of society.

But this fear did not last. He had a class in the Sunday-school of the parish church, and on every Sunday afternoon he walked down to East Cambridge, with some of the other young fellows, for religious service in the county jail. In both these relationships he was thrown into intimacy with admirable people of both sexes, in the pleasantest home life of Cambridge. He found he need not wait for invitations ; he could look in when he chose. He could play croquet in the afternoon or evening, he could join the riding parties, or there was a plate if he "happened in" at breakfast, dinner, or tea. In Boston life he had not so easy an entrée. It was the friends he made at the Law School clubs who introduced him in Boston ; and, as it happened, he was there on the more formal footing of invitation and answer. Evening parties there were, however, without end, and when it proved that George Byram could dance as well as he talked, there were subscriptions to assemblies and Germans. As winter closed in, George found that only too much of his time was likely to be spent in the engagements which he made in these circles of Boston and the neighborhood.

Ruth Lindsay was the woman who has been spoken of. It so happened that she was on a visit at Cambridge, in one of those charming square houses—built a little beyond the Longfellow house—where, if they did but know it, the inmates have everything heart can wish. No, it was not Mr. Scudder's "poet's house," but it was not far away. There had been an evening reading, or something like it, at the People's Union, where Byram had joined the group of ladies with whom Miss Lindsay was, and he had been formally presented to her. But his real introduction was in a more satisfactory way.

He had been taking a "constitutional" walk, and returning from Mount Auburn, crossed through Buckingham Street toward the Observatory. Seeing a commotion in the street, he ran up to find that a horse, whose feet were too smooth, had slipped on some early ice, and fallen, and that the driver, a stupid Irish boy, had no power to get him up. The horse plunged, and there was risk of much more smashing than was needed. Ernest ran forward, held the horse's head down to quiet him—indeed, eventually knelt on his neck to hold him in place—reached out as well as he could to loosen some parts of the harness, and having slacked the tugs, bade the boy take them off. But the boy was howling and fooling, trying to lift out a basket of cabbages from his load, and Ernest had to repeat his order, when, to his surprise, Ruth Lindsay stepped up from behind him, caught the idea, loosened one tug at once, and after a moment's instruction the other. Ernest sprang up laughing, encouraged the horse, who found his feet as soon as he was free; and then, while Miss Lindsay held his gloves, he harnessed him to the wagon again. He gave the boy some good counsel, and joined his charming ally

—one of the handsomest women, as has been said elsewhere, who is at the same time lovable and lovely.

A bit of practical life like that is a great deal better introduction than anything you can do with syllables and tones. Indeed, talk is generally so insincere when people begin, that it is excellent good luck if you begin with act. Had these young people been introduced to each other at Mrs. Dunster's house, he would have said, "It is a very fine day," and she that it was "very fine." He would have said he liked the late Indian summer, and she that she also liked the early Indian summer. He would have said he hoped to-morrow would be as fine, and she would have said she hoped so also. It would therefore have taken a good while for him to find out if she were as genuine as she was lovely, or for her to find out if he thought of anybody but himself, or anything but the parting of his back hair. But with the introduction which did happen, each knew that the other was quick, fearless, resolute, sensible, and unselfish. That is as much as anybody has any right to know of another in the first hour of a new acquaintance.

V.—HER VISIT.

Was Miss Lindsay starting for a walk? Yes, she was. They had been reading and sewing and embroidering all the afternoon. The other girls were lazy, but she had determined to go out, even if she went alone.

Might he join her? Of course he might. She must know the ways better than he, for he was quite a stranger. And so they started.

He. "I cannot bear to see a horse suffer. At the West, in my own home, I have my own span—that is, my father calls them so. When we were little boys we

had our own horses as soon as we could pretend to take care of them."

She. "How nice that must be! I remember my brother said, when he first had a horse of his own, that it was such a comfort always to have the stirrup right, and never have to change it. Yes, I hate to see a horse suffer, or, for that matter, any animal we are using. It seems so mean in us."

He. "Do you like pets?—do you have pets?"

She. "Yes, and no. I like them when they like me. I doubt if I am patient enough to have a pet of my own—I mean one I must remember. But our house is full of them—dogs, cats, rabbits to help the gardening; hens of every race known and unknown; everything but canary-birds—caged birds, you know."

He. "I know. But why not, with the others?"

She. "Why not? Because a bird is to fly. That is what he is good for. How absurd to shut him up where he cannot fly! It is like putting a locomotive in a museum. Or those splendid horses with military equipments on them, which you see in the arsenals, to show what a lancer or a dragoon is. I always hurry by those dreadful horses. How should I like to be skinned and stuffed because somebody wanted to exhibit a parasol, or a muff, or a necklace?" And the girl shuddered.

He. "If you feel so about a horse, what will you say when you have your own, give him his salt and his apple, and when he loves to take it from your hand?"

She. "You say 'when you have,' in your nice Western way, as if people had only to wish for such luxuries, and have them. Do you know, I have never gone beyond Niagara, and I am as ignorant of your free, large-scale life as—as most Boston girls are. Tell me about it. What do your sisters do? Have you sisters? After

they have washed the breakfast cups, what comes next?"

And when he was adjured in this laughing way, he tried to tell her. To tell the truth, he hardly knew what would seem new to her, and what would not. He hardly knew how she lived. He had to ask her. And all this made a frank, unaffected beginning. From the West they came back to Cambridge, to the People's Union, where they had first met, and to Miss Abbot's class of boys. Byram took one evening there every week regularly, but he confessed that he was afraid of boys.

"I think I should like that," said Ruth. "I like boys, and without knowing, I believe I should manage them. What do you do with them?"

"Oh, everything. They are taught to whittle, to use a jig-saw. We teach them to play chess, and they know how to play dominoes and checkers without teaching. Poor little pirates! if we can keep them out of the gutter, that is one thing gained."

"Yes," said she, rather sadly, "and out of the beer-shops. A Sunday-school boy of mine was brought home drunk by the police one Sunday night. That was awful." Then she shook her head, as if she would not think of this. "Anyway, Mr. Byram, you show them somebody cares for them. I am afraid that is a new lesson for some of them, poor creatures!"

"Dear Miss Lindsay, it is," said he, eagerly—he hardly knew how eagerly; but this was one of Ernest's hobbies. "In their own line of life there is kindness, of course; but the steady kindness—well, you know what I mean—that is what one would be glad, well, to get the habit of, himself." And then he told her what was really a funny story as he told it, with a very

pathetic side. He had picked up a waif the day his boxes were opened, to help him fetch and carry. As one bit of table luxury after another came out of the boxes, this Mike Downey regularly asked, "What's that for, Mr. Byram?" "What did it cost, Mr. Byram?" And Byram would answer steadily that the thing was a paper-weight, or a letter-rack, or a thermometer, or a book-mark; but to the second question, as to price, he would always say he did not know. At last Mike Downey presumed so far as to ask why he knew nothing of the element of cost, itself so important. "Why, Mike," said he, "I do not buy these things; people have given them to me."

"It made me think," said Ernest, "as I had not thought before, how we are buttressed and stayed by our friends, and I am afraid poor Mike knew nothing of that. He had had more kicks than coppers given to him. And I—why, you know how it is, Miss Lindsay; I cannot look across my room without seeing a picture, or a flower-holder, or a letter-weight, or a clothes-brush, that somebody has given me. Why, the copper tea-kettle on the hob was my mother's present when I went to boarding-school, and I shall lug it round with me till I die."

All such talk, fresh and easy, though of nothing, if you please, made the young people feel as if they had always known each other; and though Ernest declined Miss Lindsay's invitation to stay to tea, he was none the less pleased when Mrs. Dunster, at whose house Miss Lindsay was making her visit, asked him to join their riding party of the next day. Nor was he sorry when the accidents of the start gave him Miss Lindsay as his companion. He was well mounted, and so was she. The day was perfect. He was twenty-three years old,

and she just less than twenty. What more could heart desire ?

Her visit in Cambridge lasted a week longer. And it happened that almost every day the young people were all together. Ernest was a favorite at the Botanic Garden and at the Museum of Natural History. On two different days he did the honors to a gay party to perfection in showing these tamed lions. One evening they spent together in the whittling school. One evening they heard Professor Toy read from the "Arabian Nights." Ernest was sorry when Miss Lindsay's visit was ended.

VI.—THE GERMAN.

After the visit was ended, Mrs. Dunster took Ernest seriously to task that he had scarcely entered her house while it went on. "Did you think we had scarlet fever here, Mr. Byram?" she asked. And Ernest wondered himself how it had happened that till the evening she asked this question, in such daily out-door appointments with the young people, he had scarcely passed beyond her hospitable hall.

For all this gayety he had to make up by harder work on ecclesiastical history and on jurisdiction and procedure in equity. And when, after a month's midnight kerosene, he felt at liberty to indulge his passion for society again, it was in quite another field. At that time there was in winter a recess for a fortnight in the middle of the Harvard campaign, a sort of breathing-time between two rounds, when the wounds of battle could be stanchied and bound, when the principals dropped back into the arms of their seconds to recover their wind, and the fit applications were made to their blackened eyes and bruised noses. Byram's Boston

friends of the Law School all flitted into the city, and he found himself fairly overwhelmed by evening invitations there.

Miss Lindsay's winter home was Boston. Till this year her father's family had spent the most of the year in the neighborhood of Cambridge. But Miss Ruth had taken a dislike to the country home; an affair of the heart had had its crisis there—of which this reader possibly knows something. Her father had sold the place, and for that winter they lived in Boston. It happened, therefore, that in the very heat of the German one evening, at a brilliant assembly at Papanti's, as George Byram was circling round the room with that pretty little Southern girl, Miss Travis, they passed Miss Ruth Lindsay, who was waltzing with Joe Trevor, one of George's companions in the Law School. Thanks to the communistic theory of the German, when his partner left him for another, George had a chance to ask Miss Lindsay to take a turn with him. To his chagrin she declined coldly, and took another partner who had offered himself at the same moment. You would have said from her manner that she never saw him before. Poor George had to swallow his discomfiture as he might, and was left to wonder, not for the first time, at the variability of a certain sex.

He did not go to Cambridge that night. He was Joe Trevor's guest. As he went up to his room after the ball, asking still how he could have offended Miss Lindsay, he caught a glimpse of himself in a long cheval-glass, and cried aloud, in joy, "By Hercules! the girl did not know me!"

Let it be remembered that he had been but three months in the theological school, and its training had not exterminated certain semi-classical habits of speech,

borrowed from what is called profane literature, which at the end of a year he would doubtless have abandoned.

How should she know him? A Divinity student whom she last saw at a mission school, where, as he remembered, he wore a heavy velveteen riding coat, as he was explaining on the blackboard to wondering Arabs the method in which a caterpillar becomes a cocoon. How should she know this white-vested, white-necktied, swallow-tailed young dancer, with a red carnation in his button-hole, to be the same person whom, in a faded overcoat of the cut of Ponceville, she had seen kneeling on the head of Jem Fagin's horse in Buckingham Street? Anyway, poor George took the benefit of the doubt, and so slept that night sweetly and soundly, instead of pitching wretchedly from side to side on his hot pillow.

VII.—PRESUMPTION.

Happily the next night Mrs. Templeman gave a party. Not too many, just nice people, you know; and that beautiful house, with simply perfect music. Happily George Byram was bidden. As he and Joe Trevor rode to the party, Joe said, "Did you see our pretty Miss Lindsay?"

George. "Yes. But I do not think 'pretty' is the word."

Joe. "Have it as you choose. She is very nice, I tell you. She said that at first she thought she knew you. She thought you looked like a man she knew in the Divinity School."

George knew he flushed up at this, but he said nothing for a minute. Then he had time to collect himself, and asked Joe to present him if there was a chance. Miss Lindsay was at the dance, so of course there was.

Of course, too, George meant to explain instantly. But of course, too, there was no opportunity. How should he explain? Should he say, "Miss Lindsay, I am a base deceiver"? But he was not a base deceiver. Should he say, "Miss Lindsay, I am not a deceiver, but an unfortunate young man, the victim of circumstances"? Was he not a deceiver? Anyway, might she not be stiff and old-fashioned in her judgments? Might she not think a Divinity student should be better employed than in dancing at assemblies and balls every night after midnight? This was clear—that he need not explain now. There would come a more convenient season.

Alas! as the reader has seen, poor Byram had not come in life or theology as far as the critical exposition of Acts 24 : 25. He did not yet know that that more convenient season never comes. Joe introduced him, and Miss Lindsay was able to give him the dance then next pending.

He. "I hope you enjoyed last evening."

She. "Oh yes. It was a nice party."

He. "Do you like the German?"

She. "Oh yes. Once in a while, of course."

He. "I suppose you have danced abroad?"

She. "Oh no. I never crossed the water."

He. "Is Boston very gay this winter?"

She. "Oh, I do not know. I think probably you know better than I."

He. "I? Oh, I am a Western man. I do not know Boston."

She. "I do not know any one who does."

Here was George's chance. The first break this was in the icy commonplace of a first conversation. But he was afraid. Although he knew this lovely girl so well, it seemed all of a sudden as if he did not know her.

There seemed a wretched veil to have fallen between them. If only he could have spoken of the Belmont oaks, of Professor Hazen's butterflies, of the funny Irish boy at the carving school ! But till he had explained, he could not do that. So he began, almost hopelessly :

He. " I saw you at the rehearsal."

She. " Oh, were you there ?"

He. " I called it a good concert."

She. " Oh yes, very good."

He. " Were there not too many songs ?"

She. " I like vocal music."

He. " Do you sing ?"

He knew she sang like a wood-thrush when she chose to sing, in the second of a hymn, or when people were rowing in a boat by moonlight. But he was tempted to ask this question, I say not by whom.

She. " I do not sing in that fashion."

A dreary beginning again. Actually, though he had all day been hoping for this very dance, he was glad when it was over ; and before long he told Trevor that he found the party rather a bore, and he would quietly go home.

It was a wretched beginning. Still, it was a beginning. And poor George followed it resolutely, hoping always, whenever he met Miss Lindsay, that he should find that convenient opportunity to explain. But it never came. The fact that he had a secret made him conscious. Because he was ill at ease, he did not show himself the straightforward, unselfish fellow that in fact he was. For her, she could not be ill-tempered, and never meant to be hard. But if she loved anything, it was truth. If anything annoyed her, it was the stiff convention of frivolous society talk. Nobody knew better than she that it was not necessary. She asked

Mr. Byram once if he knew the other Mr. Byram, who resembled him so closely. George jumped at the chance. He said he wished he did, but that he had been very unlucky ; and just then that popinjay Wallace bowed to Miss Lindsay, and took her away to dance. George was worse off than before. His little joke had carried farther than he meant this unhappy deception.

Still, there were times when they got on better with each other. By great good luck he was asked to a state dinner party which Mrs. Belcher gave to Lord Hampden Sidney when he came over to study American institutions, see Niagara, and hunt buffaloes in a three weeks' vacation. When Mrs. Belcher asked George to take Miss Lindsay to dinner, he was in the seventh heaven ; and well he might be. On the other side of her was an attaché of the Japanese legation, who had handed down Miss Trist, and was talking to her in the sign language. So George had three perfect hours. They talked of everything in the heavens above, and the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth. For they talked of comets and meteors and the new satellites of Mars ; they talked of moles and learned mice, and the Ute Indians, with whom he had hunted, and the colors of porcelain, which she had painted. They talked of the Artesian well her father was boring at his factory, and of the fossil mineral waters which the world drinks at Saratoga. They talked of people, of Irish famine and Hungarian patriots, of the Neapolitan fishermen his sisters had met the last autumn, and of the Mount Desert skipper who took Miss Lindsay in his boat so nicely. George was himself again—fresh, simple, and unpretending. She was herself—quick, incisive, as gentle, when you left her to her own way, as she was haughty if you pressed her. Every way that was a charming dinner.

The next day George called on Miss Lindsay. She was not quite well, the servant said. The next day she was not at the assembly, and George learned she was quite ill. The next day he ventured to leave some flowers. The doctor's chaise was at the door. The recess was over, and George had to return to Jurisdiction in Equity without another word with Miss Lindsay.

That illness of hers revealed to him a great deal. If she had died, he should die ; that he knew. And when Joe Trevor's sister, who was very sympathetic and good, told him at last that Miss Ruth was out of danger, George could have screamed for joy. But the winter was well-nigh gone before he could call on her again. Then she was out. Lent came, and there were no parties. Byram elung to Mrs. Dunster's house in despair. But they could not get any visit from Miss Lindsay. When at last he did meet her, it was at an evening party where he least expected it. He did not pretend to disguise his joy. He was so eager that she was perhaps frightened, certainly annoyed. He felt that the same chill came over her which depressed him so at Mrs. Templeman's. Still, it would be gone if she knew all he had suffered. He asked her to go into the library to see the East Indian photographs. The photographs were wonderful ; and, best of all, they were alone.

George seized his opportunity. He told her how wretched her illness had made him. He was not afraid to tell her that he had prayed God for her recovery. He tried to explain to her why she was all in all to him. The harder he tried, the more unreasonable he seemed. She had not been spending three weeks in one eager thought, as he had. She felt he had never earned any right to speak to her in this fashion ; only a few interviews at dances and dinner parties. The man was a

fool. She did not tell him this. But she let him understand that he was very presumptuous. There was no if or but in her very kind but very decided rejection of his suit. Whatever might be said of him, Ruth Lindsay was not an undecided person.

VIII.—DECISION.

Poor George ! He had to go back to Practice in Equity with such spirit as he could, and this was with no spirit at all. Every day he entered the lecture-room at the Law College the memories of these weeks of anxiety haunted him. It was when he took up his other life—his life among poets, prophets, philosophers, and the leaders of the world ; the life which led him to-day to hobnob with John Milton, and to-morrow to make a new pattern for the jig-saw boys—that he was able for a few minutes at a time to escape from the wretched memories of failure. Although he kept his name on the books of the Law School, his attendance and work now were more and more at the other end of the town.

One evening in early spring Ernest had been reading the story of Aladdin to six or eight ragged street boys at the Union, when the door of the little room opened, just as he was dismissing them, and Mrs. Dunster and her daughters came in, followed by Miss Ruth Lindsay. Poor Ernest ! His first wish was to sink though the floor into the butcher's shop, or whatever it is, below.

And Miss Lindsay approached him so cordially, and with the old welcoming smile which he had so longed for. Poor fellow ! he blushed red, he gulped, he hardly gave his hand to the hand she offered so readily. But in a moment he was himself, and he saw that Miss Lindsay did not know him here, with his chinks and his

working coat, more than she had known him when he spoke to her in the German. She was speaking to Ernest now, and not to George. A moment more and he had screwed off his gas, and they were walking home. Other gentlemen joined the rest of the party, and Ernest, happy fellow ! was able to offer her his arm, which she accepted.

She. "How long it is since we met, Mr. Byram ! Do you never come into Boston ?"

He. "Sometimes. Not much lately." (Mumble, mumble, mumble. To tell the truth, he was a good deal confused.)

She. "The Boston parties depend a good deal on students. But I suppose you do not waste time in dancing ?"

He (blundering wretchedly). "I used to be very fond of dancing. But this winter—yes, I am too busy."

So they floated over the difficult beginning. When Mrs. Dunster asked her escorts to come in, the other gentlemen declined ; but Ernest was audacious enough, in his new happiness, to accept. Nor shall these pages tell how late he stayed.

Nor how, the next day, he read the *Morphologie* to the ladies as they sat at their embroidery.

Nor how, the next day, they made a party all together to see the House with Seven Gables, with Lord Hampden Sidney, who had returned from the buffaloes, having stayed much longer than he meant.

Nor how there was a charade party the next night, and Ernest was the boatman to Ruth Lindsay's "Lord Ullin's daughter."

No, nor how every day brought them together for some object of charity, of fun, of study, or of work, while Miss Lindsay's visit lasted.

For this story it is only necessary to tell that as they all walked home from the Brighton station one day, after an exploration in the boats at Auburn Dale—it was the last day of the visit, alas!—when they came to the place in Buckingham Street where Jem Fagin's horse fell down, Ernest told Miss Lindsay again that he thought of her in every waking moment, and unless she would let him love her as his life, he thought he should die.

And this time Ruth did not tell him that he was presumptuous. She said very little. But she said enough to make Ernest happy, should he live a thousand years.

That night he took his name off from the books of the Law School.

Most of the young people had drifted into the room before the reading was finished. But the men were still about, with their oxen, their partridges, or at their farms, so that the colonel did not know that the law had been violated which he had laid down, that no story should be read aloud at Sybaris which had, by any chance, been written there.

“That sort of double life is very curious,” said Mrs. Fréchette. “I am quite conscious that some of my friends think me absent-minded, while I am, in fact, very wide-awake and prompt. I have friends who think I am very well informed, while, in fact, I am a fool. My husband, who is not a fool, thinks I sing exquisitely, and talks the greatest nonsense in the world about my rich contralto. I keep him deceived; but, in truth, I cannot sing half as well as any decent frog who has a good baritone.”

“We tried to utilize the doubleness of man's nature,” said Mrs. Ingham, “but we came to grief by it.” Her

older friends laughed. The Western ladies did not know what she meant in the least. The truth was, that her husband once tried a Double, and was undone by him, in his earlier life.*

“But, seriously, dear Mrs. Ingham, he had a more curious experience that way, had he not?”

“Oh, you mean at the North Pole? Perhaps you can make him tell the story this evening; you can if any one can. You can see that he refuses you nothing.”

* See “My Double, and How He Undid Me.”

CHAPTER VII.

ACCORDINGLY, as if nothing had been prefaced or premised—as is the artful way of this little company of women—when we all assembled after a long dinner of herbs, of meats, and fowl, and fish, and of endless talk, Mrs. Menet skilfully led the way. She had a volume of Ruskin opened, and began with asking some question about Turner's knowledge of the form of waves.

Crafty Mrs. Fréchette ! We are far enough from the North Pole !

But this reader, accomplished alike in literature and in fine art, learned also by experience in the wiles of our charming friend, Mrs. Fréchette, remembers well how Turner slipped away one June from London and appeared at Hull.

At Hull he covenanted with the captain of a whaler that he might go with him into the northern seas.

So is it that Turner could ever after paint the crest of a wave. Nay, he even had a notion, as the reader knows, of “the trick of foam.”

When Mrs. Fréchette asked her wily question, Haliburton told her all this, which she knew quite as well as he.

She meant to have some one tell the story. Wily Mrs. Fréchette !

A funny smile came over Ingham's face, which George Hackmatack understood, and he said at once, “What do you know of Baffin Bay, Ingham ?” for

George knew that Ingham's smile meant that he had gone beyond Turner.

Now, Ingham is a silent man in the matter of his own achievements. He is much more apt to squeeze the sponges of the people around him, and to make out their biographies, than to give anybody much hint of his own. But the children began an attack when they found there was a chance of a story, and we gave him no mercy till he began.

When he had finished, I did not wonder that he had never told it before Mrs. Fréchette and the rest of us.

COLONEL INGHAM'S JOURNEY.

I.

It was all a philosophical experiment. I had given a great deal of thought and study to the problems of Sleep. I once lectured on Sleep all through the Western cities, with illustrations by the audience. That was, however, my last winter on the "Lyceum Platform." The committees thought I ought to furnish my own illustrations. Since then I have only been asked to lecture in the charitable courses, where they do not pay.

It is queer, when you think of it, that the problem has not been worked out before. Here is this untiring soul, clothed upon with a body which grows tired. The body needs rest, and finds it in sleep. Where is the man meanwhile? This infinite soul, who half an hour ago was listening to Isaiah, or walking with Orion across the heavens, where has he gone while the body is covered up in bed-clothes? You do not think the soul has pulled the blanket round his neck, do you?

I had brooded over this a good deal, when one night,

as my terrestrial globe stood in a strong light from a kerosene lamp, which made a very decent sun for it, I was showing Blanche Stockhardt, who is one of my pets, how nearly opposite is Pitcairn's Island, the modern paradise, to Jerusalem, and then I turned it to make noon over this Boston of ours, and to show the child how it was midnight in China.

Of course at that moment the mystery of Sleep was explained to me, and it has been no mystery since.

You see, do you not? The soul has no care about distance. Of course the moment when this body does not need him, though for only an hour of night, the soul has only to pass across there where it is day, and start up another machine, which is just ready to be wakened.

In that moment I saw that there are two of me—one here in Boston, and the other there in the Chinese Empire. I did not then know the name of the place, but as soon as I got Franquelin and Huc's map I found it. Here it is (said Ingham, crossing the room); it is in this little oasis in the great desert of Cobi. It is a place called Pe-ling, but it is not to be confounded with the Pe-ling Mountains. They are quite different, as the Chinese Post-office once explained to me. This Pe-ling is a little leather town, where they have a one-horse sort of a tannery. The other, as I call him, wakes when I sleep. His name out there is Kan-schau. He is a man who keeps account of skins as the people bring them in. He is a sort of civil service man, who gets his income once a month from the government.

[I need hardly say that we were aghast when Ingham went into this detail on subjects of which we thought he could not possibly know anything. But we knew him quite too well to interrupt. When his engine is thrown off the track it breaks all travel on all lines for that day,

and numberless jack-screws are needed before any traffic can be renewed. So we let him go on.]

II.

You know I had had to do with that region, only it was farther north. I spent the better part of a summer working with the telegraph at Nofpo Ston, a pretty place on Lake Baikal, on the Russian side of the line.* There we had more or less to do with Chinese traders, and I made one of them teach me a little colloquial Chinese by the Mastery method of Prendergast. It only requires you to commit one hundred and seventeen words to memory in sixteen different phrases. So soon as Blanche Stockhardt had gone I found my Chinese lexicon, and wrote the other body a note, asking about his health and his habits. The next day, as I tell you, I hunted up the Franquelin atlas, and found the place. I did not know his name—I mean, of course, my name—out there. But I directed the note, which was written in the first-chop, gold-button, highest Mandarin language of all, to “The Most Sensible Man in Pe-ling.”

But this was the letter which, as I said, was returned to me by the Chinese Post-office, with the statement that they had searched all through the Pe-ling Mountain, and there was no such person there as the one mentioned on the letter. The truth is that our Pe-ling—our antipodes on the parallel of latitude—latitude $42^{\circ} 23'$ north, longitude 110° east, has, as I said, nothing to do with the Pe-ling Mountains. It was, on the whole, much better that that letter did not hit him; for, when I got no answer, I hit on a much better plan. And so it was that I saw Turner, as I tell you.

* See “Round the World in a Hack.”

[He had not told us any such thing. But this is Ingham's way. And, as I say, it is so risky to interrupt him that we always let him go on.]

It occurred to me one day that—if the Chinese body kept at the accurate distance of longitude, as, in theory, it certainly would—when I, Fred Ingham, walked north on the 70th meridian, Kaolin, as I then called my other machine, would walk north on the 110th. If I walked or rode west to Albany—four or five degrees of latitude—Kaolin would, of course, go west on his parallel—say to Ling-shaw. Clearly enough, then, if I wanted to talk matters over with him, he and I had only to go to the north pole—I on the meridian of 70° , and he on that of 110° . And on this simple plan I went to work. It is a much easier business than you think it, if you begin to think, as everybody does, by supposing an expedition there to be a government affair, with measurements of magnetic force, and declination, and dip, and all that.

I cared nothing for the dip—what I wanted was to see my other self, Kaolin.

["I should think he was beside himself when he started," said George, in a whisper. But, for reasons stated, no one dared speak aloud. Little Annie pulled at George eagerly to keep him quiet.]

Of course (continued Ingham), if a man cares about the difference between *Tetrapus arcticus* and *Tetrapus borealis*, he must carry a lot of books with him and a man of science. If he carries a man of science, he must carry the man's rations and his cook, and a man to drag his sled, and so on. Hence what are called "expeditions." But if a man is only going to see a friend, or to see himself, as I was—"veluti in speculo," as the Vulgate hath it—and if he only cares for *Tetrapus arcticus* as so much good carbon and nitrogen, to be torn in

pieces and devoured for the body's fuel, why, he goes as I might go to Young's or to Parker's for my lunch, without an "expedition" to carry me.

I began by running down to New London. All this was long ago, and they still carried on the whale-fishery there. Yes, Ned, I went to your cousins, or your wife's cousins, those princes, the Perkinses; they were in that business then.

Then and there I learned, what I fancy most of you do not know, that there is such a charm about that Arctic life that the whalemens always want to be left for the winter when the ship comes home with oil. This is the way that the trade has been carried on of late years. You send up a ship, as soon as the ice is open, with a full crew. You join the men you left the last autumn. They have been fishing from the shore all the time except in the very dead of winter, and trying out their oil. You take on board the oil they have made, and spend the summer making more. Then you bring back all your oil. But the point is, as Mr. Perkins told me, that all the men are eager to stay. It is a reward to stay. You leave those who have behaved well, and the half which comes home is sour and disappointed.

Well, I did not tell my whole plan to the Perkinses. They agreed to send me as far north as they could. They agreed to take aboard an extra boat for my purposes. As it proved, their captain—no, it was not Budington, it was another man—advanced my plans in every way, though he did not quite know what they were.

[No one had said it was Budington. But the reader must understand, once for all, that this ejaculatory or parenthetical manner is in Ingham's way, and must be taken for granted.]

So I got my traps together and started. We were to

put in at Upernavik, as they all do. Yes, there is a Lowernavik, or was, but that has nothing to do with it. The governor was very civil—only too civil. His daughter was pretty. You remember her picture. No, not in Hayes's book ; before that. No, not in Parry's ; she was a baby then. I have her picture somewhere. And it was at a party he gave us and some Englishmen from Hull that I met Turner.

Had you rather I should tell you about Turner, or about Kaolin or Kan-schan ? For really I am talking too much. I am doing all the talking.

[And Ingham looked at his watch. The children cared nothing for Turner ; they hardly knew who he was. They clamored for the north pole and Kan-schau ; and Ingham, well pleased, went on.]

III.

As I said, I had no scientific purposes. I was not to write a book, or to present a report. I was not even going into society, as men call society. I was only going to meet my other self—not my better half, whom I already knew I had left at home. (And here Ingham looked affectionately at Polly, who was knitting by the fire.) So I meant to rely, as at bottom all the grandest expeditions rely, on the native Greenlanders. I found plenty of them ready to be hired. I had not to tell them whether we were going north, south, east, or west. Enough for them that they had good guns given them, such a harpoon and such shark hooks and cod hooks as they never saw before, promise of good wages, and instructions to report on board the Sarah, with eight dogs, on the morning she sailed.

Then came a great piece of luck. Baffin's Bay in

winter is much like this water-bottle when it left the ice machine, and had a solid block of ice frozen in it close to each side. Baffin's Bay, on the 20th of June, is much like this same bottle now, where the ice block floats as it chooses in melted water. It is as the turn of a straw, it is the chance of the wind, whether the "pack" of ice hugs the east coast or the west. By good luck that spring it held close in to the west coast; by good luck the winds were north-easterly, and the "pack" all drifted west. We cracked north in the Sarah, in no time. The captain meant to leave me at the beginning of Smith Sound, but he found that open, and he said he could not resist the temptation of sailing up. It was early July. The days were all one; the sun was "ever so high" at midnight. The sky—oh, it was so clear!—as if we had been in Spain. In one day—we hardly tacked twice—we ran all up that rather critical channel, which took its discoverers all summer, and my good captain said he was fairly tempted to run to the north pole.

But of course he was for whales, and must not go exploring. He landed me and my traps, and my two men, and my eight dogs, and my whale-boat, under the lee of a bold cliff that runs out—say here, if you will look at my map, Clara. Here is Baffin's Bay, this will do for Kennedy Land, and here we are at Cape Douglas-Digges. They gave us three cheers. I gave them three, and the Greenlanders howled something; the dogs howled more. They filled away for the south, and we sent our blessing with them. No, I did not feel lonely. A man carries the middle of the world with him. The world is just as level, as hilly, as large, as small, there as it is anywhere. The sea was all open at the north, only the wind hauled a little more into the

north. I did not like that then, but it proved an advantage, as you will see.

A good whale-boat like that will carry, with crowding, eighteen men. We were but three, with eight dogs and with Jan's sled, which I laid bottom up over the bow, and the dogs rather liked to crawl in underneath to sleep. I liked to have them, for they are not very sociable brutes, and they have few entertaining tricks. I had no reason for staying a moment at Douglas-Digges. Jan and Hans were the most good-natured men-Fridays who ever walked in salt-water to pack stores away. We hauled and lifted, and got the bags and the little barrel and the two boxes fitted to my mind, after some trial. Then I stepped my little mast, Jan called in his dogs, whipped the sulky ones, and I cast off; she had been fastened to a boulder of basalt which had rolled down from the cliff, and the tide was on the flow.

I had rigged her with a leg-of-mutton sail—just as we saw those boats at Huelva, George. Jan generally sat forward on his sled. But I could tend the sail as I sat in the stern. You know you steer a whale-boat with an oar.

Well, you do not care anything about our log. But the truth is that that day's success and the next told the whole story. Days we call them. But really when at midnight you have the sun nearly as high as our noon sun is at Christmas, you do not say much about this day or that day. Briefly, I cracked on, sometimes eight knots an hour, as I sailed for forty-one hours. I could not go quite to the north. But my boat sailed very well into the wind. I soon got tired of holding an oar for a rudder, and so did Hans, and we lashed our steering oar to a davit and a cleat. I made very long tacks, running once twenty-nine knots on the same course to the east of

north, and once fifteen knots and more to the west of north. The wind came round to the west and southwest. I thought then, and afterward I was sure, that in those forty-one hours of that steady pull I made near two hundred miles northing—that is, you see, nearly three degrees. And, as I say, with that one long bit, in less than two days from the Sarah, it proved that my success was won—if it were success, after all.

Forty-one hours, on the whole, toward the pole, brought me, alas! to land again. I was afraid it was land first, when I was taking the sun's declination, which I did every hour. I had, indeed, nothing else to do. The sea was as dull there as it always is. I thought my horizon was bad, and then with my binocular I became sure it was not the sea. Sure enough, "low land, and all was well"—no longer. For when we came to that beach our hard work began. I had brought rollers from Upernavik, and when we beached her, heavy as she was, we harnessed the dogs, and with their help we dragged her high and dry, above any tide, upon a sort of dry lichen there was, where we could see that deer had been. To my horror, however, there was neither ice nor snow. There was a low hill, but I got little comfort from the prospect at the top.

Here, you see, I was about five degrees, say three hundred and fifty miles, from the pole, and I and two men and eight dogs were to travel there and back in, say, twenty-five days. It was as if you had to go to Syracuse and back, from Boston, with no road. The vehicle was a large two-handed boy's sled—not what you call a double-runner, Dick, but twice as wide and twice as long as your clipper-sled—rigged with a pole for two men to haul at. But the land coast ran sheer east and west, and I would not lose even a day by cruising along

either way. Right over the lichen I started due north, harnessing the dogs to drag, and taking enough canned food for ten days for me and Jan and Hans. If the guns would not do the rest, why, we must come back.

Awful work that first day, and the second ! We made only twenty-three miles north in both. Then we came to the strangest flat steppe there is this side of Siberia, ankle-deep in lichen, where never tree or bush grew. The sled flew over it as it would over rough snow. If we had not watched those brutes they would have dragged it away from us and mankind. At last we took turns in riding, merely to keep them back after they fed. Fed ? Yes. They had blood and fat and all things they liked, more than was good for them, for the deer would stand to be shot. They were no more afraid of us than the paroquets were of poor Cowper. Their tameness was shocking to me. As for fire, the only trouble was to keep from setting fire to too much of this lichen, and so setting the north half of the world in a blaze. This lucky hit lasted us three full days more. We could not keep at our work more than eleven hours a day ; but in those eighty hours, more or less, we did make nearly a degree and a half of latitude. When we came to the sea again we were two hundred and fifty miles farther north than man had ever been known to be.

But we did come to the sea. And now we had no boat, and it was quite too cold to swim far—that is, the water was. I had no quarrel with the air. Happily the tide was out, the beach was wide, and the coast trended north-north-west, a point west. How well I remember ! Over the beach sand, though we were dead tired, I forged on, fairly running the dogs, for I knew this sand gave easy dragging compared with what the upland was beginning to be. The lichen had given out, or was giv-

ing out, and there were loose stones, as there had not been before. That was Tuesday, as I well remember. Till Friday night, I know, we ran the dogs, or made them work all through the hours of low tide, six, and sometimes seven. Five or six hours at high tide we all slept—and I tell you the dogs slept sound—on the upland. No trouble about their eating or ours; only a monotonous bill of fare. Seals galore! a stupid seal at every headland, and lying on the shore in herds or flocks sometimes, so that they were fairly in the way. You do not like train-oil, Clara, because you always see it rancid; but in the open air, warm from the blubber, if you had been walking and running a week, you might fancy it.

That coast is just like the Jersey shore. It is flat as your hand, as we say. There is one stretch where we ran almost due north thirty-six miles, if the sextant did not lie. In those days between Tuesday and Friday I made more than two degrees. Still open sea on the west of me. If I had only had my whale-boat! But I did have the dogs, and they were as well as horses—are said to be. My horse is always sick.

It was that lucky bit of beach—beach hardly broken by a creek or inlet—which gave us our last success. Sometimes we had to go into the water knee-deep at some inlet, and once I went in as high as my armpits. That time it was a carry—when we floated the sled, and swam the dogs, and took the bags and boxes and the barrel in our arms. But the hard run afterward warmed us very soon, I can tell you.

And now, if you have counted, you can see we were near half-way. I mean we were near the pole—and the pole was, of course, half-way back to Douglas-Digges. By my last three declinations, when I came into camp

that Friday night—night we called it—in broad sunshine, I was only twenty-four miles and a little more from the pole—twenty-one minutes of latitude, Dick, if you are particular; quite as close, that, as the vernier of my sextant would read for me.

But here the shore began to trend west, and even south of west. I had been conscious for some time that I was running up a bay like Chesapeake Bay, and I was now near the head of it. I fed the dogs on the last seal we had killed—you knock them on the head with an axe, Harry—and we all got into our bags for sleep, I a good deal excited now as to the issue. Before supper was done it had clouded over. I was glad I had made my observations. When I took the sun at noon—which was after we camped—I had staked out a north and south line. By this I tested my compass, which pointed about south-south-west. The variation was 152° south. So untrue is it that the constant needle points to any pole—but its own.

When I waked in the morning it was snowing, and my bag had six inches of snow on it. Yes, Clara, you sleep in a bag of felt, inside a bag of canvas, inside a bag of India-rubber cloth. After you are in the bag you button it up over your head, with only a little nose-hole for air. So it does not much matter whether it snows or not. I rolled Hans over Jan and waked them, and explained that we were to leave their dear sea and cross the land again. Hans said we should find deer, but I doubted. I only told them both that we had not far to go. Nor had we. Rough it was, very hard it was, while the snow lasted. But by noon this cleared away, and at six I let them camp. There was old snow, and in an hour they had built a snow hut under the lee of a hill. We slept like bears, and the next day, Sunday,

there were but eleven miles, as I counted, between me and the pole.

IV.

I let Hans, who had hurt his foot, stay in the hut with the dogs.

The sun had come out again. The world was white with new snow.

I was almost provoked that the country was so uninteresting.

It was not flat.

It was not mountainous.

There was no great cup in the midst of which a pole rose high to the sky.

There was no sugar-loaf, like the peak of Teneriffe, rising in my horizon northward.

There was only a vulgar rolling country, beautiful as new snow is always beautiful, but as little varied—well, as that stretch is between Tobolsk and Smilkelsk, if you take the lower road.

I bade Jan take his gun, and put in his pouch a can of beef. For me, I carried nothing but hard-tack and cartridges.

It was Sunday morning.

Up and down. Not a tree, not a bush, not a rock, not a sound, not a beast, not a bird. I was sorry we had not worn our snow-shoes. But Jan drew the empty sled ; he was sure we should strike a deer.

Up and down. North, still north. One hour, two hours, three. About eleven I called a halt. I ate two or three biscuits, and gave Jan as many.

Why was I so hopelessly sleepy ?

Half an hour's rest ; and as I was rousing myself I

saw poor Jan, without an apology, drop bodily on the ground and go to sleep.

It was not cold enough for him to be stupefied. Why were we so sleepy?

On the whole, I thought I would leave Jan. He had cleared the snow to the ground. And I covered him with a heavy bear-skin he had upon the sled. My march was now less than an hour. I knew he would sleep till I came back again.

North for the last tramp of all!

I took the sled with me.

As I pulled up a long slope there is, just before you come to the pole itself, it seemed to me that I should die with sleep. Still, of mere will power, I pressed on until I turned the summit, and looked still north.

A wide flat plain a hundred feet below me stretched I cannot tell how far away. Perhaps a mile and a half from me a black spot. Was it a man? The binocular settled that. It was a man, and he was lying on a sled, asleep.

But for me, had it been the angel Uriel, I could not have gone to him. I was dead with sleep. I just remember having sense to unroll my bag, which I carried as a knapsack, and crawling into it, and then I was at once unconscious.

How long I slept I do not know, but it must have been hours; that I knew afterward.

When I awoke I did not know where I was. But I heard snoring. The bag was not buttoned. I had been too sleepy.

I pushed my head out, and at the moment a man fell heavily to the ground at my side. He had fallen asleep as he sat watching me.

He was in the winter costume of Northern China—a fur cap, a fur pea-jacket, trousers of deer-skin. I had seen hundreds of such traders on the Baikal.

It was Myself—my Other Self! He had come to meet me! I was wholly prepared to speak to him. I cried to him in these words :



But he heard nothing ; he lay like a log.

I shook him. I rolled him over. He only groaned in his sleep. But it was as if he were dead—only he breathed. Then I remembered how I had been sleeping ! I remembered how stupidly Jan was sleeping !

Could it be ?—it was—that Jan's other self was three miles south of us, on the opposite meridian !

And I ? and Kaolin ? Of course he must sleep while I waked ; I must sleep while he waked. This was the basis of the whole journey.

No one had ever thought that one soul could carry on two bodies at the same time. Of course, then, we could not talk to each other.

All we could do was to write, and await an answer.

I wrote in my best handwriting, in Chinese, this note :

“ My brother—nay, myself ; I see you are well. My name is Frederic Ingham. What is yours ? What grief that we cannot hear each other's voices, or see each other's eyes ! ”

Then I crept into my bag, and forced myself to go to sleep. I did not sleep long. When I woke there was a note in my hand, which said :

“ I am called Kan-schau. My rank is of the blue button of the province of Fi. I am the government inspector of furs. May your waking be joyful ! ”

I think he saw the situation, and poked me hard as his last conscious act. But this made no difference. I should have waked, of course, as soon as he slept. I had with me Wells's Smaller Dictionary, and I made out most of what he wrote. Then I bethought me what I should say. What did I want to say. What do you ever want to say in a letter? Of course he knew what I was, and I knew what he was, for I was he, and he was I. So far there was no need to write.

As for the inspection of furs, I cared nothing for that. Nor did he care, I think, much about my home-mission work in District K.

It seemed a pity to talk politics. As to fine art, I did not know the Chinese words for "realistic," or "pre-Raphaelite."

It is not the first time that, having an opportunity to address a friend, I found that I had very little to say to him.

What I did was this—always a good thing to do: I opened my can of beef, which I had taken from Jan, and placed under it a bit of hard-tack. I wrote:

"Feed yourself from my stores. Eat of my bread and meat. If only you might sit with my family at my table! But, alas! our destiny forbids."

Then I crept back into my bag, counted ten thousand, and imagined a flock of sheep jumping over a wall, until I lost myself in slumber.

I woke to find this note:

"I am made new by your bounty. Eat of my last bird's nest. It is indeed life to death, and strength to faintness. We must now turn our backs on each other. But I leave a guide for your instruction."

Dead asleep I found him, but this message, and a

Chinese envelope with his Chinese address, were in his hand.

I fastened in a parcel a volume of my essays, a small flask of cordial, and a picture alphabet for his children. I wrote my address on an envelope, and on the parcel I placed a card with this :

“ FAREWELL.

“ We shall not soon meet again. I shall rejoice in your joy, I shall sorrow in your sorrow. Polly, my wife, will gladly hear of the welfare of yours. Farewell.”

I left it in his hands, but as I did so that horrid drowsiness came over me. I fell ; but waked to find, in a sort of pigeon English, this billet by my side. I was alone.

“ By-by. Top-notch muchee good for him all the ways. By-by. Two Lapland men behind this Kan-schau. Muchee-muchee, him go and help them. By-by.”

Could my gold-chop Chinese be as bad as his English ? The prints of his feet in the snow were clear enough. But he had gone. I looked at the sun, which was near noon when I left Jan, and it was now quite on the other side of the sky. I looked at my watch, which Bond had made for me, for safety's sake at this point, and had arranged for it a dial of twenty-four hours. It was half past twenty-three o'clock. Poor Jan had been asleep twelve hours, or had waked to find me gone.

I retraced my own steps, and found him just rousing. I knew one of Kan-schau's Laplanders was going to sleep at the same moment.

Jan never knew how long he slept. In three hours more we had joined Hans, and with two snow-rabbits which he had knocked over, and a few specimens of *Grassus inequalis* which he had killed for the dogs, we all feasted. We all slept twelve hours. I suppose Kan-schau was making a long pull home.

I have never seen him again.

It was pitchy dark when Ingham finished his somewhat ghastly story.

His wife rang for lights and tea.

Mrs. Fréchette thanked him cordially.

“Ingham,” said Haliburton, “why did your man Kan-schau travel north instead of south?”

“I suppose,” said Ingham, “that he wanted to see me as much as I wanted to see him.”

CHAPTER VIII.

BUT the next day was the day before Christmas.

Little story-telling was there, and little story-reading in the evening. There was private conference in every bed-chamber—there were conferences behind screens and in corners. There was a separate wagon-load of presents sent over to Kingston, to take the midday expresses each way. And the “mail rider” when he passed—it was “late mail”—had an enormous enlargement of his load. It was arranged that Santa Claus might select from an enormous mass of presents in the gray parlor, five for each stocking. For the rest the morning of Christmas Day was to be devoted, before the graver Christmas service.

And here, though one hates to drop an hour even, one must. The list of the presents—could it not be made as entertaining as Homer’s catalogue of the ships? But there were so many. Everybody gave presents to everybody. Nay, there were even presents to the cats and dogs and rabbits, who gave no presents in return. From our house presents had been sent up to the colonel’s. And by agreement with our house we were to breakfast there, and the presents to us were in the gray parlor, always saving Santa Claus’s selections for the stockings. Easy is it to calculate, dear Emma and dear Lily—who have followed this little narrative from the beginning—how many presents there were, and, if any description were adequate, that it would fill full one of the larger

volumes of the Standard Library. For the colonel's own family were eight, besides Mary May and John Rising, who were visiting the children ; the Fréchettes and Menets were four more ; Haliburton, Hackmatack, and Carter were three, and their wives three more. At our house we were seven of ourselves, beside four guests. You see, therefore, that Mrs. Ingham had at her Christmas breakfast party thirty-one persons. Each of these gave a present to each other. This alone made 930 ; to rabbits, cats, and dogs there were, say, 11 ; then to the Sunday-school children, on the gray parlor tables, there were 57 or thereabouts. The total is 998. And it is the list of these, arranged and commented on—what they used to call in France a *Catalogue Raisonné*—which I have determined to omit, after fit consultation with the publishers.

At twelve o'clock the neighbors' children were to come for their Christmas frolic. These are what Paulina Ingham calls the Sunday-school children.

It is the pleasant and primitive custom of the colonel to hold his own Sunday services, in the simple habits of his church, in the large gray parlor at Sybaris. All the neighbors know they are welcome on Sunday morning, and they gather, now a dozen, now half a dozen, according as there are or not services more to their minds in the various meeting-houses of the king's province around them. Paulina has made friends with so many of the children that they have fallen into the way of coming up to the house Sunday afternoons, singing hymns as she plays the accompaniment on the piano, and then listening as Paulina reads to them a story, or a bit of history, or a chapter of the Bible, or a poem which will do them good, or most likely all of these together. It is this group, of all ages, who were called the

Sunday-school children, and who are to come at noon for their Christmas service. A pretty gathering it was. The old Quaker names, the old historic Rhode Island names—names which run back as far as Coddingtons and Hutchinsons—were there, and you might almost fancy among the Wantons, and Hazards, and Perrys, and Wagers, that you had stepped back two hundred, or, at least, one hundred, years.

We oldsters gave way while the colonel, and Polly, and Paulina, and the rest, in their easy hospitality, made the children feel at home, and at last seated them. Then Paulina read to them this little story :

EAST AND WEST.

It is a young husband and his wife riding through a bleak country—up hill and down dale—after sunset. The hills are cold and the valleys are damp ; but the girl (who is a girl yet, though she is a wife) is brave, and even cheerful. She holds her donkey up to his work by her loving talk to him ; and, as she tells her husband, her steed gets on quite as fast as his does, with all his beating ; for they are on a single track, she following him, that he may make out the way more safely in the darkness. Now a loose stone, now a slough, muddy as the Slough of Despond, puzzles the beasts, and drives the man to desperate measures. Sometimes the puzzle even stops the jackasses, who, after all, have to pick out the way. But with her it is all the same : “ Do not beat him ; do not scold him. It is no fault of his. We will now soon be there.”

And she spoke true, if “ there ” meant the hill-top, from which they should see the city. Twenty times had he promised his girl wife that with the next hill they

should see the lights of the town, and twenty times there had been no lights, only the same black, ungracious sky. But that is a long lane which has no end ; and at last the wished-for sight appears—a beacon here, rays of light there which showed the front of a palace. This time poor Balaam was not beaten. His driver said, cheerily : “ Look up, you brute ! Did I not tell you so ? ” And down the hill Balaam almost broke into a trot, followed readily by his more fortunate companion, with her lighter burden.

But they were not yet to take off their armor. “ Little luck to the late,” says a proverb ; and so they found it. Quarters at the great houses there were none ; quarters at the tradesmen’s houses there were none. People just like these travellers, and people much grander than they, had been coming to the fair all day ; and every inn-keeper was driven to his wit’s ends, so that nobody had a word for such insignificants as they. After a dozen rebuffs, and when an hour was gone, the girl for the twentieth time proposed her plan to her husband. He had passed through all the stages of disappointment and effort, to the other stages of abject depression and solicitation, and was now in the lowest stage of silent despair :

“ Dear old man ! Do let us go to my uncle’s,” she said.

“ Go to your uncle’s ? It is two leagues, if it is an inch. And you riding since ten o’clock, sick as you are. Child, you will be dead before then ! ”

“ Never fear me,” said the girl, bravely. “ I am not to die to-night, nor to-morrow, nor the next night. When my time comes to go to our Father, He will let you know. If you want to please me, we will leave these inhospitable palaces, and we will go to my uncle’s.

He will not be so hard. If he has two crusts, we shall have one."

"As you say," said her husband. And into the darkness they fared again—well forward in the night now—away from this heartless, graceless, inhospitable, cruel town.

Up hill, down dale, up hill, down dale, as before. One furlong, two furlongs. At first they could see white stones which marked these distances ; but soon the girl saw nothing. She really fell asleep, or so nearly so that she did not note the passage of time. Her husband, too, was now too drowsy to complain ; and so the three hours which nearly come to midnight crept by, after a fashion which seemed shorter to them than the one hour before, while they were questioning and waiting in the bustling town. At last he gave the glad cry : " Here we are !" and the girl started up, and roused up her faithful Jezebel to new activity. One long pull up hill, one long waiting while they waked an old woman to tell them their way ; and so they came to the rambling, tumble-down ranch—the rough collection of weather-worn buildings indicated as their uncle's home. Then came one more wait ; for everybody in the village had been in bed long ago. But it did not last forever. The fat old uncle came blundering to the gate at last. He found the bolt and drew it open. He led the two asses into the courtyard, and then first learned who his late guests were. He had never seen his niece since she was a baby ; and, if he had seen her yesterday, he would not have known her, under this heavy shawl and veil, wet with fog and even touched with frost in places. The girl had to explain her relationship and to introduce her husband.

"And now to think !" he said. " Wherever shall I

put you ? Thomas and his people came only this afternoon. They are in the women's-rooms, and I must not wake them. Cousin Ben and his sister and his children, they had been here since breakfast. James's children are all in the summer parlor. We made them beds on the floor. My children are in my bed. I have a rug on the floor. Would you mind—just to-night—if I shook down the straw for you here, while your wife goes in with Anna and Ruth and Naomi ? Then in the morning the boys shall clear out what we call Duke Joseph's bedroom. That will just do for you ; but to-night it is full of bags of olives waiting to go to the mill."

The poor girl, who had been so brave before, shuddered now for the first time.

"Don't think me foolish," said she, "but I do not like to part from my husband. We have never been parted so far ; and we will not begin to-night. I am a country girl, you know. I am used to straw, so it be only clean. Nice barley-straw ! What can I ask better ? And you need not bring your shawls or rugs. See what great wraps my husband has."

So she let her uncle lift her from the saddle, to which she was fairly shaped by these twelve hours of journey. She could not even stand without help. And he led her to the end of the horse-trough, that she might sit on it. He stumbled out his new apologies and suggestions ; but the girl was firm. Her husband had long since ceased to have opinions, or to urge them. Great heavy rugs were brought in by the servants of the households. The traveller's own great rolls were unbuckled. The barley-straw was piled in great heaps at one end of the vaulted room, and the shawls were laid over it. And here the tired girl lay down, and hoped for sleep, which did not come.

For it was thus and here that, after the brave struggle of that day, Mary brought forth her first-born child in a stable ; and so they laid Him in a manger.

Glad, and proud, and happy—as she sank at last to rest when they told her that her child was well and that she need not fear for Him—she was lulled to her sleep by a song of shepherds outside in the courtyard. They sang gently, but so gladly :

“ Glory be to God in heaven !
Glory be to God !
Peace to men on earth be given !
Glory be to God !
Welcome to the blessed boy,
In glad tidings of great joy.
Tidings from the angel throng
Of peace on earth in heavenly song,
Singing in their sweetest strain
Peace on earth ; good will to men.
Glory be to God ! ”

So Mary went to sleep ; and they told her afterward that the rough shepherds who had sung this welcome song to her baby had been brought in, one by one, and had seen Him in His manger cradle.

It was on the twelfth day after that Duke Joseph's chamber had been cleared from the olive sacks, chairs from the parlor had been brought to it, a bedstead and curtains from the house, mats and rugs from all the neighbors ; and now, for the first day after the baby was born, the old nurse, who had adopted poor Mary-Mother as her own, let her sit at the open door, wrapped in an Edomite shawl, to look down into the courtyard. It was always a stirring scene. Children playing ; farmers coming in to trade ; the servants washing dishes or skewing meat in the kitchen ; here a jackass tethered, and

there a horse ; such a place is far more picturesque in all its surroundings than the work-places of our mechanical life. And every room in the old ranch looked out upon the courtyard or down upon it.

Of a sudden an outburst of excitement, and man, woman, and child desert the square, rush out into the street, through the gateway, and Mary and her baby are left alone. The change had been wrought by the smallest boy of the household, Jehu. He had done it by twenty words. Jehu had been in mischief this morning, as, indeed, often before. This time he had been sent off in disgrace. Exiled thus from his brothers, he had sauntered down the hill, wondering what his hand might find to do, on a cold winter day, when, of a sudden, he saw a train of Edomite travellers approaching. So it was that he rushed back with the cry :

“ Camels ! camels ! Ten camels and three dromedaries. They have passed Nahum’s tower on their way.” So it was that every brother and sister, and every servant and visitor followed him.

To the girl, as she sat there proud and happy with her wonderful boy, the silence was a relief unspeakable. She is alone now, for the first moment since that dreadful night, when for an hour in the streets of Jerusalem she felt so wretchedly alone. Always some one had been at her side, with this act of kindness or that of service—needful, perhaps, certainly well-meant ; but then, without meaning to, they separated her from her God. Her husband could just guess at her thought and her feeling. She could just press his hand. But with old Dorcas at one side, and old Aunt Rachel at the other ; with the nurse asking this question, and twenty neighbors coming with good wishes, she could not have the comfort of her treasure. Now she began to live, that,

in this fresh air, with this open heaven, she had Him, so beautiful, so wonderful, in her arms.

Not for the first time, but for the first time since she was in Bethlehem, the girl sang aloud, in a strain which angels might have leaned to hear :

“ My soul doth magnify the Lord.

My spirit doth rejoice in the good God who saves me.

He, from His heaven, looks down on His handmaiden lowly ;

And from this day forth men shall call me Mary, the blessed.”

So sweet and pure were the tones, that even the group of children were hushed by them, who at the moment were rushing into the courtyard. Most of the little ones, indeed, were moving backward, so that they had not seen the singer, before they heard her song. They were a sort of herald in advance, to announce and to honor the procession which followed up the street. But now they turned, in admiration, to know what was the angel voice which sang so triumphantly. They ran eagerly to Mary, as she sat in the open doorway of her room, looking down from the corridor upon the court. They begged her, in their pretty way, not to cease in her singing. But at the moment, the train they were heralding and had already forgotten, began to enter under the gate. A tall camel bent his ugly head, that the crossbar might not strike it, and the leader, as he saw the child and the mother, turned eagerly to his master, who rode, and pointing to the boy, cried ; *Roah ho* ; Behold, it is He.

In a moment the rider had sprung to the ground. In another moment he was upon his knees, and offering the salaam of Eastern homage, as if he had found his king.

All was uproar for a few minutes. Other camels entered the hospitable courtyard. Other riders in their turn sprang from their saddles, and joined the chief who

had led them in eager expressions of gratified joy. Nor was it till Joseph, the husband, and Heli, the uncle of Mary-Mother, arrived, overtaking the swifter troop of riders who had passed them, that the chieftains who had entered could make their presence or their purpose clear.

For ages upon ages, they said, in the East, far beyond Jordan and the Red Sea, they had been taught, that a King was to rise, who was to be a Prince of Peace and Saviour of mankind. When He should come they did not know. Only this they knew, that such a prince had been promised by Moses whom Ishmael and Israel both revered, centuries and centuries before. He had bidden all the East watch till this King came, with God's own power. To learn the place of His coming, and the time of His coming, they had studied the stars. They knew that in Moses's time, the greatest planet, Jupiter, the star of power, and the red planet, Mars, the star of kings, and the cold planet, Saturn, the star of wise men, came together for once in the heavens. They knew they parted then, and had never all come together again till now. But in this fated year, only a few months before, these three great planets—silver, red, and gray—had drawn together again in the sky, closer and closer, till they well-nigh touched each other; and this was in the sign of Dagon, the fish, the patron star of Philistia. Token enough was here to bid these three princes mount their camels far away in the East, and travel from day to day to Palestine, to learn what Moses's people there might know of this new-born King. They crossed Edom, the starry wonder still before them. They crossed Jordan, and saw it still. Shall we go to Jerusalem to Herod, the most cruel of kings? The stars are not over Jerusalem! They sent two messengers to ask at Jerusalem, "Where is He that is born King of the

Jews?" and Herod was enraged with the messengers. But the wise men said, "The King is to be born in Bethlehem of Judah."

"They showed us old Scriptures to show it must be so. And when our messengers came back to us, far out in the desert yonder, we were well pleased; for the three stars were hanging over the fortress and the house here as we came near. As the sunrise paled them, our last sight of them was as they hung over this caravansary where we are.

"Then we made our camp, and sent a messenger into the village to know in what house a King was born. And our messenger has said to us that it is in this house only there is a new-born child; and we have come to honor Him."

So saying, the gray old sheikh from the desert bade his dragoman open the bale with which the first camel had been laden.

"Lady," he said, "we know what is becoming for ambassadors. We have brought our offerings. These bags of myrrh are the purest which ever left Arabia. Our virgins have gathered it with their own hands. No mean laborer has prepared it. It comes to you as the gifts of daughters of kings." And the old man stepped on one side.

Then came forward Balthasar, who seemed to be in higher honor; and he renewed his salaam with more formality than before.

"My gift," he said, "is frankincense for the temple of my Lord. It has been brought by the sons of the chiefs from every sacred glen. They have gathered it with their own hands; nor has it once been touched by a slave." And he stepped on the other side.

Then slowly came the chief of the three, with his ser-

vants following. With difficulty he bore a casket of the leather of Yemen, bound with clasps of steel. He bade one of his attendants turn the key. And lo ! the casket was full of golden darics of the old coinage of Cyrus himself.

“ Lady,” he said, “ we have called ourselves the chiefs of the desert. But we know what is due to the Prince of Peace. And this is our tribute.”

The proud mother could only say :

“ He hath exalted those of low degree.

He bids the princes bend from their thrones.”

Joseph, her husband, made fit reverence to the princes, and asked his kinsman to make them welcome. Heli was eager, with his sons and his servants, to give that evidence of welcome which is better than words, as they unloaded the tired camels, as they brought water for the strangers’ feet. The women, with such haste as they might, went to their kneading-troughs and ovens to prepare a feast. Heli sent out Nahum and Arni to kill two sheep and a young goat. And they sent in haste to their aged kinsman, Menna, the most devout of the elders of Bethlehem, and quite of the highest rank.

And when the feast was spread the old man blessed it in prayer to the good God—who had sent the princes so far in quest of truth.

“ Blessed is the Lord my strength.”

He said :

“ He hath sent princes from Edom, and He hath sent wise men from afar.

He sent His messenger before them, and the stars sang together to praise Him.

Serve Him with gladness, and come before His presence with singing.

Ye shall hallow your gifts as ye sing praise to Him.

Ye shall feast in His faith when ye make gifts to the poor.
Ye shall scatter broadcast in the sowing, and His hand shall give
the harvest.
And He that taketh and He that giveth shall join hand in hand.

“My children,” he said, “this day binds us of the West and their friends from the far East as one household. They eat of our salt, we burn of their incense. This child, who brings us together, shall be called indeed the ‘Prince of Peace.’

“And from this day through all time the season of His birth shall be the great festival of joy.

“The kings of the earth shall bring offerings, and the little children shall give presents, and all men shall praise the God of heaven, who sent the kings of the East to do honor to Him who was born in a manger.

“And to be Prince of Peace, see he has given us a little child.”

And after they had feasted, the princes and their servants, and Heli and Joseph and the mother and her child, all blessed the Lord and all slept.

And before morning a vision came in the night to the leader of the princes that he should go back to his own country by another way. And with the first light of the morning the chiefs girded their loins and packed their camels and departed. And the like was never seen in Bethlehem again.

Then Colonel Ingham stood up by the piano, and said to the children :

“You know these are the shortest days in the year. Last Sunday was shortest of all. If you had looked you would have seen the shadow of the sun was longer at noon than it has been any day, because the sun was lower in the sky, and had his shortest journey that day.

“It was on that shortest day of all that the poor storm-tossed Pilgrims landed. That is the reason that we celebrate the landing at Plymouth Rock. No one celebrates the landing of the prosperous lords of Massachusetts Bay. They landed on the longest day of the year—on St. John’s day—but nobody cares for that, or celebrates that.

“And I am sure you all know that Christmas celebrates the coming of the great Light in the midst of the great darkness. ‘The people that sat in darkness saw a great light.’

“You see, there are three anniversaries to Yankee children—Forefathers’ Day, the Shortest Day, and Christmas Day. And of all these, the central lesson or sentiment is the same.

THE THREE ANNIVERSARIES.

“Short is the day, and night is long ;
But he who waits for day
In darkness sits not quite so long,
And earlier hails the twilight gray—
A little earlier hails the ray
That drives the mists of night away.

“So was this land cold, dead, and drear,
When to the rock-bound shore
That Pilgrim band, Christ-led, drew near,
The promise of a new-born year.
Twilight, which shows that even here
The son of gladness shall appear,
The land be dark no more.

“So was the world dark, drear, and wild,
When on that blessed morn
A baby on His mother smiled.
The dawning comes, the royal child,
The Sun of life, is born.

“ The lengthening days shall longer grow,
Till summer rules the land ;
From pilgrim rills full rivers flow—
Roll stronger and more grand.
So, Father, grant that, year by year,
The Sun of Righteousness more clear
To our awaiting hearts appear.
And from His doubtful East arise
The noonday Monarch of the skies,
Till darkness from the nations flies ;
Till all know Him as they are known,
Till all the earth be all His own.”

The smaller children were beginning to be restless. But the colonel reads well, and he held their attention well enough to the end. Then, without much order, they were led into the red parlor, where the curtains were drawn close, the blinds shut on the outside, and their presents arranged on a Christmas tree—the first, I think, seen in the Narragansett country, unless Canonicus hung presents on some yellow pine for his babies. And after the wonders, and after John Rising had appeared as Santa Claus, to a treat for them all in the dining-room, and as the afternoon began to decline, they scattered and went home.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. MENET thanked Paulina for her little story, and then told, assisted by Mrs. Fréchette, and with the sympathy of an occasional blush from Theodora Decker, the story of their Christmas in a palace only the year before. This story is familiar to this reader, or should be.

“Why do not some of you professional story-tellers make us up a Christmas book of eighteen stories, which should lead us, step by step, from Miss Paulina’s pretty beginning down to these days we remember?”

This was Mr. Menet’s question.

The colonel was well pleased. He said he had had the plan on his mind for a long time, and, sooner or later, had written several stories which would belong in that series. The nineteenth-century one was taken from real events in Washington, and may still be remembered by the faithful as the story of “Bread on the Waters.” Half way back, in the midst of Peter Waldo’s time, was the story which we called “In His Name.” “It first appeared,” said Colonel Ingham, “as a tale told to Sunday-school children in twenty minutes. But it interested me, and I went to Lyons, and all over the rough country of Father John’s ride, to gain the local color.

“There are one or two more of them in the desk yonder.”

Then the ladies began to ask him to read one of them; and though Ingham had vowed he would have no more

reading of his stories while the party lasted, he was over-persuaded, and read

THE COTTAGE ON THE VIMINAL.

I.

She stepped out of the roadway, that the string of mules might pass by her. It was the longest of these long strings which had passed yet. The beasts pressed on with an indifferent air, as if they could take no notice of a miserable biped, who was fool enough to travel on foot. Their bells sounded musically enough, but the poor woman was too tired to think of music, or even to notice the contempt of the animals.

At the end of the train were the two muleteers, who had all the beasts in charge. The older of the two saw Sophia, as she slunk back into the heavy clump of laurestinus on the roadway, and had heart enough to see as well that she was very pale—though the sunshine was warm—and that the blue lines beneath her eyes were of the very blackest blue. This he saw as his own gay steed clattered past her. He drew up suddenly, and spoke hastily to his companion: “Stop the brutes; presto—now!”

Luke uttered a queer whistle, and then shouted a queer “wh-who-oa,” which was entirely understood by all the mules; and, in half a minute, the whole procession was still. Horace turned in his saddle, turned his gay mule as well, bowed civilly to the poor travel-stained woman, and said as civilly:

“You seem tired, mother, and this is an ugly hill before us; if you would ride—my white beast yonder—Clara has carried an enipress before now.”

If the cloud above her had opened and dropped roses

on her, the poor traveller could not have been more surprised.

“But I am no empress,” she said; and though she tried to smile, she spoke sadly. The words themselves were good enough Latin, but Horace saw, as he had guessed from her costume, that she was no Italian, and that these three or four words were all strange to her. The man took on all the more tenderness.

“Ah, no! There is but one empress, and she, as I happen to know, is beyond Milan; for Clara yonder took her much of the way thither. But, if you like it better, Clara has carried my dear mother, oftener than she has carried the empress. It was the dear old woman who taught her that dainty step.” And seeing that the poor traveller looked her thanks for this unexpected charity, he bade Luke, who was awaiting the call, to fasten a proper saddle on the beautiful creature. Then, dismounting himself, he completed his courtesy by lifting the woman to her seat. “All ready,” he cried to the groom. And Luke, with another shrill whistle, and another yell, in the language intelligible to beasts, started the train again.

For a few minutes, upon her luxurious saddle, poor Sophia could not speak. Her face was flooded with tears, and her very scanty Latin vocabulary failed in words to express her thanks. Nor did this hearty, jolly Horace need them, nor expect them. Our younger readers will pardon us if we do not give the Latin sentences, which they would find as hard to read as for him they were easy to utter. He poured them out, more with a feeling that he should relieve her if he kept on talking, than with any care for answer.

“Steady, Clara, steady! Hold the off rein a little more firmly, mother. I said those same words to our

sovereign lady—may the gods bless her !—as we crossed the bridge. Yes, yes. That is well. Oh, you are used to riding, I see. Yes, yes. Clara knows you are used to riding. Never fear Clara, never fear. She has as sure a foot as any horse in Cæsar's stables."

"No. Yes. You do not know—cannot tell. You do not think how much I thank you. I am—my feet are—I am so glad !" These words she stammered out after a little, with an occasional mixture of the Spanish words which were so much easier to her, and which came without being called.

"Feet sore. Yes. I should think so, on those flints beyond Claudius's Forum. I sent for the roadmaster, and I showed him Cæsar's seal—there it is, if you never saw it—and I said to him, that if when I passed by again there were five flint stones as big as his thumb nail on the road, he should be crucified. And when the poor dog saw Cæsar's seal, he was frightened, be sure of that ! Foot sore ! I should think so."

And then the good fellow went chattering on, with much that Sophia could not understand, with some explanations that she guessed at. He had, in truth, been sent with a heavy convoy of the smaller movable furniture from one of the palaces, which had been selected, at short notice, to complete the comforts and adornments of a summer lodge a little beyond Milan, which the empress had selected as her home for the hot months. His mules had done their duty, and were now clattering back to Rome without any cargo.

II.

It was this bit of good fortune which gave poor Sophia her first friend in the great wilderness of Rome. Poor soul ! She thought it saved her life, and perhaps it did.

She thought she could never have dragged herself over those last twenty miles of roadway, with her feet bleeding, one of her ankles badly strained from a misstep, she hungry and faint, and conscious that she was fainter as every slow milestone came in sight. But this jolly, kindly Horace made everything different. At the inn at night, he made the landlord and the servants understand that she was not to be pushed aside, though her clothes were torn. She slept on the first bed she had seen since she left Spain. And in the morning he called her to a breakfast such as she had not seen—poor, half-starved creature—since then.

And why had she left it? Ah me! There is the sorrow of this story. It was four months before, that her only boy had left her, kissing her—oh, so tenderly—just as they finished supper. She knew then and there that something fatal was in the air. But she knew, also, that he would not tell what it was. She had asked too often, and he had parried her question. The handsome, gay, daring fellow had left her! And all night he did not return! No, nor the next day, nor the next night, nor the next, nor the next. He had never returned.

He was one of a secret club—a club which we should now call “Young Spain.” And this night they were to surprise a convoy of stores and arms on their way to the Roman garrison. And with the arms, the leaders said, they would establish a station of their own, and cut off all the trains to the garrison. And so they were to establish a Republic of their own, and Spain was to be free again.

Alas! for all this grand plan—the Roman commandant knew it as well as Ferdinand knew it—and Ferdinand and his friends had not lain in their ambush an hour before they were all taken prisoners—and before the next

morning they were all marched to Barcino. There they were chained to the seats of a galley and made to work their weary way to Rome.

All this had poor Sophia, Ferdinand's mother, slowly made certain in the first bitter week which passed after his capture. And now this long journey to Rome was a proud, sad mother's enterprise—begun in the hope that she might find her brave boy in the slave markets of the great Babylon. So was it, that she entered that city, riding on the white mule, which but three weeks before had taken the empress on her last afternoon's ride to her summer home.

And when they came to Rome, Horace's good-nature did not forsake Sophia. No. She must not live where his people lived. That was impossible. For, as muleteer extraordinary, he was a dependent on the palace, and must live on the slope of Palace Hill. But it was Horace who persuaded a stupid, dull old woman, a cousin or second cousin of his father's third wife, to let Sophia make her bed in the corridor of her house, for the few days or weeks before she should find her son.

III.

But Sophia never did find Ferdinand. Had she found him, this story would never have been written. Nor will we now stop to tell the steps by which first she learned when the galley arrived ; then found which slave market her boy had been taken to ; then, misery of miseries, found which master of gladiators bought him in the market ; and at last, poor wretch, worked her way into the presence of this brute among men, and from his own lips heard how her dear boy died in the arena, trampled under the feet of an elephant, who

had been goaded to madness first, and then was driven into the amphitheatre with twenty others, upon a hundred naked men, to kill them for the amusement of the Roman people.

Poor Sophia ! She dragged herself out from the presence of the vulgar wretch who told her the story. He had given her elews enough to make it eertain there was no mistake. Indeed, Ferdinand, three inches taller than most men, was not a person about whom there could be much doubt. She would never see her brave boy again !

Should she ever see Spain again ? She did not care ! Why should she ? What had she left to live for ? She had had her boy to live for, and her hope to see him again. Now that hope was gone, and he was gone. Rome or Spain, it was all one to her, if she must live ! Why would no beast trample her to death ? Why would not the eight horses before Cæsar's chariot spring upon her in the street and crush her ? Poor Sophia ! Why must she live ?

And how must she live ? This old crone Sempronilla did not scold a great deal when Horace told her she must provide a straw bed for Sophia. To tell the truth, all the straw for all her beds came from Cæsar's stables, and a good deal of the oatmeal for her polenta came from the same region. But not any love for Horace, nor any fear of his greatness, nor any hope of pickings from Cæsar's granaries would have made the old witch feed Sophia an hour unless she were paid. And the little store of coin with which Sophia started from Hispalis was long since gone. And the last silver link of what had been the necklace her husband gave her when they were married, had found its way to the silversmith's, the day after she first set foot in Rome.

How should poor Sophia live ?

She went far out into the Campagna, and even beyond, into the hills—farther than most of the lazy flower dealers cared to do. She had platted for herself a large, flat basket in the Spanish fashion. On a mass of cool, wet maidenhair below she had laid the pretty hill flowers and covered them with more wet maidenhair, so that when she returned to Rome they had all the freshness of the morning full upon them. Most of them she left in her basket at the street corner, but with two beautiful bunches she stood at the door of the brothers Torlonii, the great court jewellers, just as the elegant ladies, in the course of their morning drives, stopped there to look at the last new trinkets. One after another brushed by Sophia, without even looking at her gorgeous anemones. But of a sudden a dark-haired, dark-eyed beauty stepped out from the shop. She wore, as a sort of scarf, a broad ribbon, which Sophia knew was woven in Hispalis, her own home. Not in the hard Latin now, but in her delicate Iberian language Sophia said :

“ Will you look at my flowers, beautiful one ?”

“ Look at them !” cried out the other, with delight, “ look at them—I will look at them and at you all day, if you will only speak in our dear Spanish to me. I have not heard such beautiful words—no—for too many years. And your beautiful flowers too—sweet mother ! Who sent you to me ?”

Sophia blushed, and stammered her answer. The great lady drew a ring from her finger and gave it to her, took the two bunches, and told her to bring her more on the second day of every week. Sophia knew now what the word “ week” meant. As the East conquered the West, the division of time into weeks was more and more known in Rome.

And what the Lady Elvira had said to her, and had

done for her, lifted for the time one of her cares. This ring, with its great pearl, was of such worth that, as Sophia knew, it would make her a rich woman in the eyes of the old crone, Sempronilla. Starvation was not to be the death she should die. But alas ! she was more lonely than ever. That Spanish voice, and the pretty Spanish words had been enough to remind her of the deadly separation, which parted her, here in the midst of crowds, from all her race. She was glad she had seen the lady ; and yet she was crying with bitter tears because she had seen her. She did not try to sell more flowers that day. She took her flat basket, and, as she could, stumbled toward home. But she did not go far.

For she knew she was faint now. She remembered that she had eaten nothing but a few olives since she left Rome, at what we call three in the morning, for her flowers. She must have walked twenty miles since then, and now it is high noon. Poor Sophia ! she tried to remember a short cut home across the edge of the Viminal Hill. She was puzzled more and more. Her poor weak head swam. Was she going blind ? The trees themselves spin round. "Mother Vesta ! help me," and she fell in a dead swoon upon the roadway.

On the instant a little girl sprang from the porch of the cottage she was passing, and finding that she could not even lift her head, called :

"Mamma, mamma !"

Mamma came, and called Alexander, a tall stripling of fourteen. The three lifted and dragged poor Sophia from the street, and laid her in the shade on the veranda. Sophia rallied as they did so, and tried to speak.

"You are faint, my sister ; will you sit in our doorway ? Bring a cup of water for this traveller."

The first words of love my poor stranger had heard from her own sex since she left Spain.

“Maria! bring water for her feet; she has been walking all day.”

The first act of such tenderness since she left her home.

And as the little girl with tact and tenderness ministered to her, the tears flowed from her dry eyes again as they had flowed the night she parted from Fernando, on the eve of that foolish fray.

“And who are you, who have such welcome for a stranger?”

“We know no strangers. We are all brothers and all sisters.”

“We!” Who could *we* be?

This welcome was the beginning of a new life to our poor Sophia. No. The Greek woman in the pretty cottage—who spoke Latin almost as badly as Sophia did—would not let her leave the cottage all that afternoon. And, when night came, and the poor Spaniard began to speak as if she must go back to the old hag Sempronilla’s house, Phoebe put a veto on it all. “Why should you go? You say she cannot speak your pretty language. You do not pretend that it is home. She will never care for this sore ankle as well as I shall do. She will never arrange your pretty flowers as my little Mariadion has done. You do not dare call it home, after what you have told me of her surly ways.”

“And what right have I here?” stammered out poor Sophia, half in Spanish, half in Latin words.

Phoebe laughed as if she did not understand; nay, perhaps did not, but only guessed.

“Oh, it is a way we have! We shall be lonely without you. See when they come in to supper whether we

do not need your Spanish voice. There is my little Mariadion, half Latin and half Greek ; there is the boy Lucas, from Cyprus ; I do not know what you call him ; then we have the girl from Carthage, whom you will call so pretty, and my brave little harper from Alexandria. Indeed, indeed, we should not do without a Spaniard. And, I forget, here are my two tall Britons." And two young men, strangely alike in face and figure, entered as she spoke.

" Indeed, indeed," sobbed out our poor Sophia, as well as she could, " if I did as I chose, I would never go away."

So easy as this was her introduction into Phoebe's haphazard family. That day she rested. The next day Phoebe would not let her go into the Campagna. " No, no," said the resolute, tidy, vigorous little woman ; " wait till to-morrow, and then our little Mariadion shall go with you and help you with your basket. You shall take turns."

Sophia herself had learned to dread the future. So it was—she knew not how—that, without questioning further, from day to day she fell into the life of the pretty Viminal cottage, as if she had been born to it. The tall young Britons, so gentle and sympathetic and tender, seemed to her like motherless sons, whom she might care for in place of her own boy. Nahum, the Cypriote lad, would try his new songs with her, and beg her to tell him—" to tell him true"—whether he sung quite up to the pitch of his little harp on the higher notes. And well pleased was he, indeed, when she would join him in that rich contralto, and in that pretty foreign accent in which all her words were sung. And so it was with them all. She had not been there a week, before each inmate of this strange party had made her feel that she

was wholly necessary to them all. As for paying anything to Phœbe for the bed she slept in, or for the food she ate, that was out of the question. Phœbe made endless fun of any such proposal. But Sophia found very soon many ways to save Phœbe's steps, and to relieve her from care, work, and anxiety. She fell into the way of making her own contributions of fruits or of other food to the stores which provided the simple, ample table. One great victory, as autumn drew on, was her arranging so that one of Horace's muleteers brought in, from far away on the Campagna, a cheese which Sophia had bargained for, and had paid for week by week, as she passed the farm in her flower-gathering.

And what was the magic of the cottage on the Viminal? What was this secret spell which bound all these people together, people of so many races and even languages?

Sophia had not been there a day before she caught the first clew to it. The first night at supper she saw that they all gathered together at the table, men with women, and this alone surprised her a little, though she had known this done before. But Maria and her mother, and Cleopatra, too, bore themselves in a more easy way than poor, frightened Sophia was used to. They bore themselves more as if they were companions, and not slaves, to the men. Slaves, clearly enough, they were not to anybody. The men served them at the simple table quite as much as the women served the men. They all stood an instant in perfect silence at the table before any one either sat or reclined upon either of the couches. Sophia rightly guessed that this was some secret rite of worship to some god. When the supper had begun, Nahum, who was next her, filled the earthen cup from which she drank. He had not spoken

to her, nor did she know his name, but the handsome boy bowed with a serious smile, as he poured the water, and said :

“ IN HIS NAME.”

And Sophia saw afterward that no cup was filled, or passed from one to another, without this same smile and legend, which clearly enough made of the simple act a sacrament.

The truth is, that Sophia had stumbled and fallen just before a Christian church. The cottage on the Viminal was, practically, a little church, such as Paul refers to when he says, “ The church in their house.” On the Lord’s day the different friends whom Sophia met there would go early in the morning to some gathering, where more like them, of like joy in life and like faith in heaven, assembled for thanks and worship. But all of this little company would have called the cottage of the Viminal their church, for the cottage and its home activities represented to them that common life which makes the life of the church wherever it is found. Each helped each, each loved each ; but that was not enough, nor was it all. Each was on the lookout, as the day went by, to see where he might help others. So it was, that, when the poor Spaniard had fainted in the roadway, Phoebe took the incident as a divine direction that she was to be the ministrant to the stranger’s needs ; and her little Molly—for Molly is the English for Mariadion—fell in, quite of course, with her mother’s notion.

As for worship, it was many, many months before Sophia even went with them to the place of their Sunday offering. Then again it was long before she thought even of counting herself as one of them. We must now tell, in as few words as we may, how she earned for herself the joy of full participation in their company.

IV.

The summer and the hot autumn had drifted by. Sophia thought more and more of her new companions—less and less now of her old friend Horace—and hardly thought at all of the old hag Sempronilla. But one evening she was suddenly roused to think a great deal of him. She was listening to Nahum's rattle at table one night, when, from quite the other end of the room, she caught the words, spoken quickly and with excitement :

“ — it was so mean. Horace had been his friend ; gave him the first ass he ever beat, and now the viper turns on him.”

Sophia listened with all her ears. She hushed Nahum's nonsense with a hasty gesture, and, in a moment, heard so much to interest her, that she crossed the room and drew the two speakers into a corner. One of them was the Briton Edgar, and the other a black man whom he had picked up on the quays where they worked, and had brought into the company.

It was her Horace, our Horace, of whom they were speaking. And this, of which they told, was a mean plan to forestall him, perhaps to ruin him. The hot summer over, the empress was on her return. Horace, as a matter of course, would have had charge of the convoy—but the lady had determined to change her route, and come part way down the Adriatic by water. A rival in the carrier's business had learned the imperial plans from a court favorite, and by a daring but not difficult intrigue, he had arranged ingeniously, that two days off from Rome the lady's route should be varied, under the pretence of a visit to some old Etruscan tomb, just open. She was to come out above Cures, while poor Horace with his mules was waiting at Mandela. It

would be easy at Cures to give the impression that he had been careless. At the instant of disappointment this raseal Nareissus was to be ready with an elegant cortége of animals. The empress was to be delighted with the equipage, and Horace was to be disgraced.

“ I went round to tell him, on my way baek,” said the blaek, “ as soon as this drunken dog blurted the preeious plan to me. But he had gone, Lucas had gone. The stables were all shut. I got a beating for my pains from a dictor on duty. I went to tell his wife, but they would not let me into the house, and said she was at some mystery.”

“ Where had Horace gone ?” asked Sophia.

“ Gone ! he had gone on his business. He had started early, that he might have a full day and two nights at Mandela to rest the mules. And so soon as his baek was turned the whole crew of them had left the stables.”

“ Mandela !”

“ Yes, Mandela. I knew he said Mandela. It is somewhere in the Sabine Hills.”

“ I know Mandela,” said Sophia ; “ you get a glimpse of it through the valley from the Æsvian Hill. Mariadion and I climbed there one day.”

On the instant her resolution was taken. She whispered no word of it, not to Nahum, not to Mariadion. She was still shy. She was afraid, indeed, of being hindered. She bade them good-night. She went to her little cell, for cell it was, rather than room. But she only entered it to change her dress and prepare for a night tramp ; and in five minutes she stealthily left the cottage, unnoticed by any one, and in half an hour more she was on the great Tiburtine way. Night or day, she would overtake Horace with her news, if she died the moment after she told the tale.

It was night already. For a November evening had come on. But it was starlight. How fortunate that she had kept the house all that day ! No ! Not fortunate. What a tenderness in the good God who had kept her. Sophia breathed a word of thanks to Him aloud. She looked up eastward at the bright stars. She wondered in which of them her dear boy was at home. For she had come to believe in the belief Phœbe had inspired in her, that the dear fellow was somewhere. Noisy crowds of pleasure-seekers coming back late from the country rattled by her. But after an hour there was little of such company. One by one the lights faded out from the cottages of the Campagna. But the stars did not fade out. How still it was ! How desperately lonely it was ! But Sophia pressed on. She did not dare to ask herself if she were tired.

There was no danger of her losing the track. The perfect engineering of the Romans led this road straight and high above the Campagna, so that she could not have missed it. As she crossed the Anio, and heard the heavy tom-tom of the late autumn frogs, she amused herself with recalling the little Spanish rhymes which children sang with these for the burden, and she soon broke the silence by singing them aloud. After you pass Cerbara there is not even a village, hardly a farm. But this was all the better for Sophia. She remembered a Spanish proverb which said : " Where there are no sheep there are no dogs," and she knew she was more afraid of dogs than she was of men, which was to say a great deal.

But now she would have faced lions.

On and on ! Once she sat on a milestone to rest herself and fairly fell asleep. She waked, in falling from her seat, so tired was she. Once, in a dark wood, per-

haps a mile before she came to Agrippa's hot-baths, three howling wolves ran across the road, so near her that she could have struck one of them with a stone. But fortunately they were more afraid of her than she of them.

And then the road began to go down hill, and Sophia fairly ran. She knew by the starlight that midnight had long passed. And there was light enough now from a crescent moon which had worked its way up in the east to reveal the roofs of the bath-houses. What she had not expected was there also—moving light. Something had waked the sleepers. All the better for her; there would be some one to tell her—what she had not yet learned—how long since Horace and Lucas and their train went by. And at last, as she turned the corner of the public bath-house, a coffle of mules, a noisy crowd of grooms, a lantern here and a lantern there, and then Lucas himself, and then Horace!

On so little a pivot as the hour of his starting from the hot-baths turned Horace's life. On that, and on the loyalty of this brave Spanish widow. She called him on one side. She told him her story. She was able to confirm it by details which brought conviction to him as he listened. At all events, he could be ready for either event. "Little mother, you have saved me from the galleys." Then he was sorry he had said this, for he knew what the word "galleys" meant to her. "Little mother, I would rather every beast in the stables died of horse-ail, than have failed to meet our lady."

New tidings, new plans. Happily, his coffle of beasts was extra large. He divided it and sent Lucas on to Mandela, according to the first plan. Himself he took the beautiful mule Clara, and a train large enough for all the ladies of the imperial party, crossed the hills by a

by-path of which the bath-house people told him ; gave the go-by to Cures, where his mean rival was waiting, and passed the night among some charcoal men in a high glen, on one of the spurs of the mountain.

The next morning, on a lovely bit of greensward, shaded by ilexes, his whole force awaited the empress's coming. He had been warned of it by a scout. He stepped forward and saluted the dignified chamberlain.

"I thought our lady might be tired of her litter, and be glad to change for the saddle," said he.

The chamberlain, well pleased, trotted back to the litter, and announced that the relay had appeared.

The great lady, glad to change her posture, walked a few steps on the greensward, and said, gayly, "Why, it is my own dear Clara ! How I have wanted her all summer !" And as Horace held the stirrup for her, "My good fellow, I have not forgotten you, nor your nice Clara. When we are in the city, go round to my steward and you will see that I remember you."

Horace knew enough to bow without speaking. He reserved his moment of triumph till half an hour after, when the whole imperial cortége passed through Cures without stopping, and he was able to ride up to his spiteful rival, whom he saw at the court-yard of the inn, and ask him what business brought him so far from Rome.

V.

"How did you dare do it, little mother ?" asked the boy Nahum, with admiration, when, the week after, Horace had come round to thank Sophia again, and to tell the whole story of her heroism.

"We have a Spanish story," said Sophia, who now spoke Latin quite fluently, "that the ants lent corn to

the sparrow when he was starving. And the sparrow, in his turn, waked the bullfinch when the cobra was climbing the tree to steal his eggs. And the bullfinch called his mates and they sang a song to the queen when she was sorry. And the queen forgot her grief, and sent a load of corn to the army. So, our story says, the ants fed the army."

"And our story says," said Phoebe, "that if we bear each other's burdens we fulfil the whole law of Christ. But to-night, dear Sophia, you have another task before you than to go to the hot-baths. See this strip of parchment from the Lady Elvira."

"Let the flower-woman bring me a basket to-night. I want the basket, not the flowers."

This was what she wrote. In truth, she wanted not flowers, nor basket, but Sophia herself. She wanted some one to whom she could speak, without fear of eavesdroppers.

"Dear mother," she said to Sophia, even while her unconscious maids were sitting round her; "dear mother, you know these Christians. Phoebe, yonder, in your cottage is one of them. The old man, Eleutherius, is their leader—overseer they call him. How can you bring him and me together? No! do not seem surprised. These girls must think we are talking of the ivy you shall send me for the mysteries."

Sophia said that though she had seen Eleutherius she did not know his residence even. But one of the boys would know, and would bear a message to him.

"Dear mother," said the eager Elvira, "ever since the day I came to your Viminal cottage—since I sat and you platted the wreath for my beauty here—since I saw the little girl watch her mother so tenderly, and that saint care for all so sweetly—I have been under the spell.

“ Dear mother, my brother is in Egypt. I sent there for their books—their Christian books ; my brother would die for me !

“ Dear mother, I know them by heart. I can pray with your prayer ; I can hope with your hope ; I know every blessed parable of the Master, and I have taught them all to my beauty, to my Julia there.

“ Dear mother, I would have no secret from these girls, but that Julius thinks harm might come to your dear old overseer if in the palace they knew that the old man had been seen here.”

For her husband was a high officer at court.

“ Dear mother, I send to you that you may go to Eleutherius. Tell him I will meet him in any cave or catacomb. Morning, noon or night I will meet him ; I and my husband. I chose that you should tell him, because you are the messenger our Father chose to bring me to Christ.”

“ I ? I ? I the good God’s messenger ?” stammered Sophia. “ How can that be ?”

“ Mother of mine ; dear mother,” said the impetuous lady, “ did not I see, week by week, your face more sweet, and your torture less bitter ? Did I not see the darling girl who came with you, an angel of tender love ? Did I not see that you and she had the Secret of Life, which I had not found in the palace, had not bought with my jewels, had searched for vainly in travel, nay, could not discover wholly even in my love of my husband and my worship of my child ? And then, dear mother of mine, as I tell you, when I went to the Viminal Cottage and there saw love divine, love first, love last, love everywhere, then I knew how I could gain the treasure too !

“ Mother, dear ! That was a blessed day for Ju-

lius and for me—when you first brought me your anemones.

“Mother, dear, you will go to your overseer; you will ask him to meet me at the Viminal. Let him teach me; let him question me, and let him baptize me—me and my darling, and my brave husband.”

She was fairly sobbing now, and poor Sophia was sobbing, too.

She went home, wondering how it was that she should summon Father Eleutherius to the baptism of the noble lady, when she had been too humble herself even so much as to think if she were fit for baptism.

“Indeed, indeed,” she said to Phœbe, when she told her story, and told her of this wonder, also; “I am nothing and nobody. If only I can do something for the others—if only I can help—it is enough.”

VI.

And here it is, really, that this story begins, just where it ends.

It was in an arched room, lighted with candles fastened to the walls—a room made by the meeting together there of three rock-hewn passages beneath Rome. A sarcophagus of rock was on one side, on which was a loaf of bread and an earthen vase filled with white wine. Another earthen vase was full of water. The old Eleutherius was there, the two tall Britons were there, Phœbe and Maria were there, all our friends were there, Horace was there, and Julius and his wife, the Lady Elvira, who had the little Julia at her side; and, of course, Sophia was there.

And Eleutherius called Horace to him and said: “My brother, do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?”

“I will make Him the Master and Leader of my life.”

“It is enough,” said Eleutherius, and he baptized him.

He called the little Julia, he called the Lady Elvira and her husband, and he baptized them.

Then he said, “There is one more. She has been called from death unto life. In her exceeding sorrow she has found exceeding joy. In the darkness of death she has found the light of life. The Lord has made her His messenger to others. The Lord now folds her in His own arms, and receives her.

“Sophia, dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?”

“Father!” said Sophia, “he has been the Saviour of my life.”

And he baptized her.

It was her first Christmas festival.

“Picturesque times, indeed,” said Paul Decker. “I suppose you will say not more picturesque than these.”

“Of course not, since this is the same world. But all of us paint our distances—even our middle distances—better than our foregrounds. ‘All of us,’ I say—of course the princes do as they choose. Ruskin says that Turner made his immortality out of the London fog, which he had right around him. Most of us do not know what to do with our east winds so well. You do find a bit of every day in a modern cartoon, that will be picturesque in the year 2000.

“Polly, if you will turn on in the portfolio, you will find a Twelfth Night story, which will do for the fifth century in Mr. Menet’s book. The other gentlemen, or you ladies, must ‘brace up,’ and give us two more between.”

And, wholly forgetful of his rule, Colonel Ingham told Bertha she might read the story of "Next His Hand." "Any way, the moral is good," he said.

NEXT HIS HAND.

CHAPTER I.—THE SIEGE.

This little story begins in the city of Orleans, in France ; but it was not then called Orleans. It was called Aurelianum. This name, by phonetic spelling and otherwise, had become Orleans.

I shall call it Orleans for short.

Orleans, when the story begins, was besieged by Attila, the Scourge of God, the terrible King of the Huns. They had come from far-away Asia by the way of Hungary, bringing with them their wagons and their beasts of burden, even their wives and their children ; and they were ready to take hold on any land they fancied.

And Attila had bidden Orleans open her gates to him.

But Agnan, Bishop of Orleans, had said "No." And just then what Agnan said was what was obeyed in the city of Orleans.

The former governor of the town and country was a king of barbarians, who had settled there a generation before, named Sangiban. But the bishop believed, and probably believed truly, that Sangiban would surrender the city to the savages, for he was not much other than a savage himself ; and the bishop had squarely told Sangiban that he and his might go about their business, and that he and the people of Orleans would defend the town. And Sangiban had e'en done as he was told, and had gone.

And so the bishop was left to do the fighting, as well as the preaching. And he did it, and he did it very well. If he had not done it as well as he did, Orleans would hardly be there to-day, and there would have been no dukes of Orleans and no New Orleans. The bishop had told the people as much as to say that if they meant to have any city they must defend it. And they had turned to, with might and main, and mended the gates and the walls, and got their armor ready, and provided arrows and pitch-balls and kettles for hot water on the ramparts. And they had driven into the city every sheep and ox that they could drive, and had emptied every barn and granary for ten miles round, and stacked up hay and grain. And the bishop had hurried far away to South-eastern France, and had told the Roman general that he and his would hold the city till the 14th of June. If he could relieve them before that time, all should be well. Then the good bishop came posting back again; and so it was that he was fighting and preaching and preaching and fighting when the story begins.

For Attila had come with five hundred thousand men, and had shut up every way to the city, and watched the river with his boats, that no one should cross there. And, though the Huns did not like to attack stone walls, and were better at fighting in the field, Attila made ready his machinery—battering-rams and the like—to beat down the gates, if he could, and to come storming in. He summoned Agnan to surrender. But Agnan said “No.” And he enrolled every man and every boy, not to say every woman and girl, for the fighting and the watching. Before the army of the morning went to the ramparts they attended mass in the great church; and before the relieving army took their place in the evening

they attended at a vesper service. The good bishop gave them the sacrament every week, and led their prayers, and bade them give God the glory. "You shall not be destroyed," he said. "I have had a vision, and I know." And people would come and tell him that they could see a legion of men, covered with their leathern shields like a great turtle, working slowly up to the South-west Gate, and bringing with them the heavy battering-ram. And Agnan would only reply: "Never fear, dear children. You shall not be destroyed. I have had a vision, and I know." And if any became impatient, he would tell them what the great Patrician had told him—that by the 14th of June the whole Roman army should appear to defend them. "Only wait till the 14th of June, and you shall see the glory of God. You shall not be destroyed. I have had a vision, and I know."

In all the city the people we have to do with are a family of five—father, mother, and three children. The father is always at home. For on the very first day of the work on the walls a heavy stone crushed his foot, and he cannot walk. But his fever is ended, and he sits and makes arrows for the boys. There are two boys (or they are always called such), one named Constant and one named Sebastian—nineteen and seventeen years old. And, besides, there is Honoria. She is seventeen. She is a twin with Sebastian. One week Sebastian is in the morning watch, and Constant in the night watch. The next week the watches change, and it comes the other way. The boys like the excitement of the parade. But they find the sentinel's duty stupid. The minute Constant is off guard Sunday afternoon he runs home, where his mother has his supper for him. The boys will not give up in the midst of war the duty of daily life in the

midst of peace. The bishop always said that only he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Now, it had been their duty once a week to cross the river, pass the ridge which parts Orleans from Sens, to see their mother's brother in his cabin there, and to carry him his supplies, and to bring back his messages. He lived there all alone. He was the ferryman at the river. He was a holy man, after the fashion of their days. For he is not the holiest man who goes the most to church. But perhaps he is holiest who is most alone, if he does the most work for God. Victor, the boy's uncle, wanted to serve God ; and he had determined that it was his part, winter and summer, day and night, to keep this ferry ready for travellers. If there were no travellers, he read the Gospel and the Psalm, or with his knife carved crucifixes from holly-wood. He was what was called an eremite, or hermit, or man of the desert.

The boys said to their mother that not for forty Attilas would they give up their regular weekly visit to their uncle. And so soon as it was wholly dark on Sunday he who was off guard would run down to the stream, wade in silently, and paddle over the current to the other side. He would watch the Huns' outposts carefully, till he was well in the woods, and then, night or day, those boys knew how to find the dear old hermit's cell. Before morning the scout would be off again on his way back to Orleans, and, with a pot of honey or a well-wrapped loaf of bread, would be at his father's house and would take a midday nap, to be ready for the bishop's vespers and for his tour of evening duty.

A siege was a siege ; but not such a siege as we have to-day. And so each week, through the siege, each boy still did the duty that came next his hand.

CHAPTER II.—DESPAIR.

“My dear sister”—this was a letter of the hermit ferryman to his sister—“I know how you feel about these journeys of the boys. But have no fear. I would not ask them to come. Nor would you bid them go. But, as Constant says, ‘it is the duty next his hand.’ He did it in peace; let him do it in war, so he does it as a cheerful giver. If the Lord is against it, He will give us a token. If the Lord did not wish it, I think the brave boys would see it was wrong. Let them do the work which they think comes next their hand.

“It is not by armies, or dukes, or patricians, not by consuls or emperors, that the Lord conquers. It is by the sling of the shepherd—by that Goliath is felled to the ground.”

And so the boys’ mother held her peace, and made ready every Sunday night the supper for the swimmer, and wrote her cheerful little note to their uncle, and prayed the good God to keep over all the outstretched wing which had never failed so far.

But her faith and their faith was to be hard tested. And hardest of all was it for her poor husband to sit and split up the very floor of the house to make arrows for the watchmen on the wall.

And at last the end came, and poor Michael chafed in his confinement worse than ever. Five weeks of the siege had ground by, and there was not word nor signal from the Roman Patrician, Aëtius and his army. The fourteenth of June was hard at hand, the day on which he had promised to be here. Once and again the Huns had shoved their great battering engines toward the wall. And once and again Agnan’s sharpshooters, with such arrows as Michael and the others made, had picked off so

many of the barbarians who worked them that the others would not stand to the ram, and fairly ran away. But, on the other hand, the Huns were trying their archery too, and if any man appeared between two of the stones on the top of the wall a long shaft struck him ; or two or three at a moment, perhaps. So that the townsmen were discouraged in their turn. Food did not fail, and while there was the Loire there was drink. But courage failed. And they paid less and less heed to the bishop when he said : " I have had a vision, and I know."

The bishop raised the host and bade them march with him around the ramparts. He took the sacred relics of his church with him, and they sang hallelujahs as they marched ; but none the less the number of faithless grew larger. And at last the poor bishop was fain to choose the very leader of the malcontents, and to say to him : " Climb to the very top of the castle, you who are so far-sighted, and see if the mercy of God is not coming." And the people below watched the shifty fellow as he climbed higher and higher, too high even for the longest shafts of the Huns ; and everybody laughed when the cloud of their arrows fell too low. And they could see the man standing on the topmost stone of all, and shade his eyes as he looked to the south. Then he clambered down, and he sheltered himself on the lee side when the storm of arrows came ; and so he slid and jumped briskly down, till the bishop could hear him. He had seen nothing on the plains ; not even a cloud of dust. The good bishop led the way into the cathedral, and fell on his knees and prayed more ardently than ever. He said to the discontented people : " Wait only two days." And he sent out a soldier to the Patrician, to say : " If you do not come this very day, my son, you will be too late." The people waited for the two days ; but the

soldier was never heard of again. Then the brave bishop himself began to falter. He had asked for two days, and he had meant to keep his word to the people. But just at that moment the very windows of heaven opened, and such a storm came as no man had heard of before. Pelting rain for three days in the midst of June; now and then a storm of hail. The great battering-rams of the Huns were washed from their road-ways, their tents were all in confusion, and their very bowstrings were soaked with the water. But the rain would not last forever, and when the three days were over, and the sun came out, and the poor bishop saw not even a moving shadow on the southern horizon, he was fain to send an ambassador to Attila, to ask for terms.

The barbarian almost struck the ambassador, and sent him back to the town frightened to death.

The bishop felt that he was deserted within and deserted without. He determined to surrender at discretion. He sent no more messengers to the Huns. But at the break of day, after mass, instead of leading the reliefs to the ramparts, as was his custom, he led them to the gates, and he struck with his own hand the first blow on the heavy bolts which held the doors. Then, with tears, he turned to the armorers and bade them do their work, and they flung the gates open. The Huns on the outposts were amazed, but stealthily one drew near, and another; one came in, and another; and they could detect no ambuscade. They ran back to announce their news to their officers; and they in turn to the king. With every slow precaution the king and his great officers came in. Agnan had all his men in hold; the Huns saw no man. It was as if they were in an enchanted city. They brought in their wagons with perfect order, and men detached for the purpose began

to pile in the best booty from the houses. The great army of the Huns was held by their chiefs without.

At this very moment the boy Constant came running up from the river, dripping with water. He had come from his weekly journey to his uncle. He sought and found the officer of the day, who, as it happened, was his own centurion, told him his news, and was led at once to the bishop. The news was this: That as the boy crossed the ridge he had climbed the highest chestnut tree he saw, and had looked southward and could plainly see the march of the Patrician's army. He could see the sunlight flashing upon the spears; he saw them all halt as they crossed a little river, and then saw the crowd of light troops as they opened to the right and left after crossing.

The bishop was in the cathedral. Hardly speaking to the boy, he sang "Hallelujah;" and in a moment he and all the people around him were singing praises to God. Seizing again the host and pressing forward in the procession, he moved straight to the great Place of the city, where Attila sat in his chariot.

"Scourge of God!" cried the bishop, "I will be true to you, as I have been. The eagles of the Patrician are in sight from the hill."

Attila knew the bishop by this time well enough to trust him. He sent aids on the instant to his southern outposts. A message was not long in going and returning on those swift Hungarian horses. Attila was too good a soldier to stand an attack on his rear while his men were plundering a city. The army was too well in hand to be confused for a moment by his change of orders, and the sun of that hot June day had only begun to go down in the west when the last straggler with the last tent was marching northward from the walls of

Orleans. And all the people gathered in the cathedral, and bishop and priests in high solemnity sang praises to God. And the people joined with them in singing : " The Lord is my Strength, my Fortress, and my Deliverer."

Next day, in the evening, the Roman Patrician, Aëtius, rode into the courtyard of the bishop's house, flung himself from his horse, and threw his arms around the bishop's neck and kissed him. And the bishop said : " We were at our last gasp. But that one of our boys saw you from a chestnut tree, Attila would have taken the very vessels of the host and the very drinking-cups of our children, and we would not have had here left one stone upon another.

" The blessing came to us because that boy, Constant, did the duty that came next his hand."

CHAPTER III.—THE RETREAT.

The Patrician Aëtius and Torismond, king of the Visigoths, had led the allied cavalry of Rome and Southern France far in advance of the rest of the army.

" I saw a vision in the night," said the Patrician to the bishop. " I could not sleep. I went to Torismond, and he was awake. We called Theodore, and found him in his armor. We mounted our horses and called a trumpeter, and at midnight he sounded to arms. I can tell you that the grass has not grown under our feet as we came."

The dash of cavalry on the rear of the besieging army would have been thrown back, but that it promised so much more. But Attila knew that his superstitious Huns were discouraged. He found his very prisoners caught the rumor of battle, and with whatever arms they could seize were breaking the heads of their captors.

He found that the people of the town were barricading the very streets against him. The people in the houses were flinging down their chimneys upon his men. He was in no position to deliver battle, with half his army on one side of a river, half on the other, and an angry town and a fearless bishop in the middle ; and so, sulky and almost without a word to his officers, he gave to every leader the signal of retreat. As the great host passed over the bridge, the Romans and the Goths dashed at them again and again. But Attila's rear-guard knew their business as well as the Patrician knew his, and at the end of the day's fighting every living man of the Huns was gone. But fifteen thousand dead bodies lay upon the ground. As the Roman general supped with the bishop that night, he said : " Bishop, it is the eighth day before the Calends of July." He had, in truth, held to his promise. This was the 14th of June.

And the army of the Huns marched, sulky, almost to the point of mutiny, all that night and all the next day. King Attila never ate bread. As he lay on a heap of oat-straw, watching his savage cook, who was brewing a bowl of soup from horse-flesh, the commander of his rear-guard came in himself with a prisoner. " We found this man," he said, " at the ferry-way yonder. We staved his boats, after we had used them, and we have brought him along."

The ferryman was the good old Victor.

" I see by your dress," said Attila to the prisoner, sternly, " that you are a priest."

" I am not a priest," said Victor. " I am an humble ferryman."

" What is this cross, then ?" said the barbarian.

" It is the sign that I am the humblest servant of Christ, the Son of the Most High."

The officer who had brought him in whispered to Attila : " Priest or not, he is a prophet and knows the future. All the peasants say so."

" Prophet, is he !" said the barbarian. " Then let him prophesy." And he struck Victor across the face with the braided strip of hide he held in his hand. " Prophecy to me ! Am I beaten or am I victor ? Prophecy, I say ! Who am I who smite you ?"

Little did the barbarian know the weight of those sacred words.

Victor did not so much as raise his hand to wipe away the blood which spurted from his eyebrow.

" You are the scourge of God," he said.

" You are the hammer of God with which He strikes down the faithless."

" So I have been told before," said Attila, well pleased.

" When God pleases," said the other, without pausing, " He breaks the tools of His own wrath.

" When He pleases, He takes the sword from one of His servants and gives it to another.

" He will crush you in this battle, that you may know that power comes from God alone."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the officer who had brought him had sprang at his throat.

" Thy own guard waits ! Shall they flay him alive ?"

" No," said the king, as calmly as if a moth had crossed the candle. " Take him along with that Bishop Lupus you have yonder. Give them the same rations. Such sacred people will do no harm to me or my army." And he smiled on the officer with that smile, so unlike other men's, which all his leaders knew, but which none of them could understand.

But, meanwhile, the ferry across the river in Champagne did not fail because Victor had been carried away by Attila.

“Let us do the duty next our hand,” said Constant to Sebastian, when they found the hermit’s hut empty.

And with their own axes they cut down trees, and with their own adzes smoothed them, and then corded them together into a raft. Nor was it a week before they had a long rope of thongs of hide stretched from bank to bank, so that they could take men and women back and forth, as they went toward Sens or toward Orleans.

So they held to the duty that came next their hand.

CHAPTER IV.—THE BATTLE OF CHALONS.

And now came one of the battles of the ages. Europe is the Europe it is, America is the America it is because that battle was so fought and because it ended as it did. Attila had only withdrawn his hosts that he might fight on the open country, where his chariots and his cavalry could fight most at ease. His great army made their easy fortification, of which the very wagons were the bulwarks.

And the Patrician’s army? Oh, it was made from ten, from twenty different tribes! I cannot tell how many different kings were there, nor how many languages. I am afraid it was not for love of each other they fought. I am afraid it was not for love of God, nor from love of Christ. But it was for something which these are very near to. It was for love of home. If the Huns conquered, not a home was safe where were these men’s wives and little ones. If they beat back the Huns, there was a chance for another generation that

their children might live and die in the homes where they were born.

They hovered round the Hunnish camp, and were afraid to attack it. Attila kept within his line of wagons. He called the Christian bishop, he called the old hermit, he called all his own soothsayers, to tell what would be the chances of the fight. They cut open beasts, and studied the spasms of the fibres as they died. They scraped the bones, and read the letters made by the red nerves stretched across them. And at last, as the grim king looked on, the head soothsayer gave this oracle :

“ That army shall conquer whose king is slain.”

With such comfort Attila began the fight.

On the other side was the son of Alaric, with the sons of the men who had fought under Alaric. He had seized a little hill which commanded the field.

“ See what cowards they are !” cried Attila to his men. “ They are afraid to fight upon the plain. We are used to conquer, on hills or on plains. You will see them next trying to come down. And now follow me, and I will strike the first blow.”

And he did. It was three hours after noon. And from that time till dark and after dark of that summer day men slew, and slew, and slew.

Attila led his central host right through the Roman army. There they had placed the traitor Sangiban, because they distrusted him. But the Patrician, on the one side of Attila, and on the other side the son of Alaric, and his grandsons, fronted the Huns, and drove them. Each general of the three (Attila, Aëtius, and Theodoric) knew that he was himself succeeding, till Theodoric fell, covered with the slain.

They slew, and slew, and slew, till it was so dark that

no man knew where he was or could see an enemy. Attila found his way back to the camp. The other generals stumbled on it also in their wanderings, and saved themselves from capture only by silence.

Morning came, and Attila did not move out from the circle of his wagons. The lion was in his den, and he would not leave it. The huntsmen were wise enough not to disturb him.

A great concourse of people carried Theodoric to his funeral-pile. The Huns looked on from behind their wagons, and the chief soothsayer said aloud :

“ That army has conquered whose king is slain.”

Nor did Attila rebuke him. The lion was hit too sorely. When the time came he gathered up his train, and sullenly crossed Europe again to his lair on the lower Danube. No man pursued. A thousand years after his children's children defended Europe there against the Saracen.

When Attila crossed the Rhine to the eastward Europe was safe.

He would not let the holy men leave him. But all the same, the ferry across the river in Champagne had not failed.

The two boys, Sebastian and Constant, made their summer home there. As their father grew strong, he relieved one of them or the other. And after vesper service on the Lord's day one of the boys alone, or one of the boys with Honoria, made the march across the ridge, as in old time, to the home of the hermit.

But summer passed, and autumn passed. Many a straggler from the armies crossed the ferry ; but there was no word from Victor.

All the same, the boys did the duty that came next their hand.

CHAPTER V.—THE FEAST OF KINGS.

A defeated and disgusted army cares little for its prisoners, but to be sure they do not escape.

A little guard was specially assigned for the holy men, as they were called, half in mockery and half in fear.

But the guard did not care whether they were hungry or thirsty ; whether their feet bled or their clothes covered them.

The guard rode on horses and the prisoners went on foot. All that the guard cared for was that the prisoners did not lag behind. So crept by the hot summer days ; and the great column, now halting for rest, now breaking up to forage and for plunder, slowly flowed back through Bavaria and followed the Danube down to these it left behind.

And I dare not say that times had been more cheerful in Orleans. Where there had been no planting there could be no harvest, and all last year's harvest had been swept away. What the Huns had not taken the Visigoths and the Romans had devoured ; and, between their enemies and their friends, the people of Orleans were left with well-nigh nothing to eat.

The bishop led them out into the fields late in June and made them all plant turnip seed. And a few wretched turnips were harvested, only half grown.

And he sent them into the woods, and they gathered the acorns which the swine would have fed upon, but that the swine had been killed by Attila or by his enemies.

And it seemed as if the winter closed in earlier and harder than ever. Cold, indeed, and hard, indeed ; and to hardly any colder or harder than our friends.

“ But we will thank God,” said Michael, “ that my

foot is well, and that I can take my turn with the rest, for there are those who came round to advent without their sons and their daughters." And he took his pretty Honor on his knee.

His wife looked almost as young as the pretty Honor, and the tears were flowing out of her eyes, for she really thought she should never see her brother Victor again. Still she was brave, and she said :

" We will thank God that the boys are such good boys and that they love to do the duty that comes next their hand."

And the pretty Honoria said " Amen ;" but there was nothing else that she could say. The girl did not repine ; but she thought it was hard that her brothers should be always away on the task which had cost their uncle his life. So November went by, and December, and the end of December came, and the Feast of the Kings was drawing near. But Honoria roused herself up one day, and said to herself, as she came home from mass : " I shall die if I go on moping so ; and our dear mother will die if she goes on grieving for Uncle Victor and only pretending to be glad when my father comes home."

So the pretty Honor set herself to thinking what she could do by which she could forget herself, and what she could do that her mother might forget the great grief of the year.

" For this," said Honor, aloud, " is the duty next my hand."

And as she said this it happened that she saw three barefoot children hiding under the ruins of a chimney, where a house had been destroyed in the siege, and trying to stone some doves that had lighted in the cellar.

" There !" said she. " There are the smith's chil-

dren. Their father is dead and their mother can make no holiday for them. They shall come to our house on the King's Day, and they shall have a festival."

So she asked the smith's children ; and then she asked the little Felix, and Delia and Martial—nay, even asked some wretched barefoot and ragged little savage children of Alains, who lived round the corner. She told them stories of the feast they should have. She told them how they should float walnuts in the water, with candles in the walnut-shells, and what a frolic it should be on the King's Night, because that night the three kings brought presents to the baby Jesus.

The little Alain children did not understand one word that she said ; but the others explained to them that it was to be a feast, and all the children said that they would come.

And when Honoria came home to her mother, she told her how bold a promise she had made. And now for these twelve days there was to be full work enough in the house. Sebastian was at home the first week and Constant the second week ; but the days were stormy and their father was almost all his time away beyond the ridge, at the hermit's hut. " For there is nothing else," he said ; " and I and the boy will stick to the duty that is next our hand."

But Honor and her mother and her brother made every sort of toy that their wit could invent ; or they knit from the rags that were left hoods and scarfs for the poor brats that were to come. And as the last days before the King's Day came Honor herself made a great cake ; and into it she put a red bean, for a fortune for the girls. And the old bishop laughed at her one day, when he came in and told her it was nothing but a pagan custom. But she did not care for that.

And the bishop was pleased with pretty Honor's pretty feast. And he blessed her candles for her, and blessed her cake for her, and told her that before the feast was over he would come round and bless the children. And so much interest did he take in Honor and her little throng that he told her to tie a blue ribbon round each child's arm of them all, and bid them meet on the morning of the King's Day in the square before the church and come to the side door and knock.

So when the little things knocked, with pretty Honor at their head, there were four deacons, with long gold staves and with elegant flowing dresses; and poor, modest Honor was led forward to the very front of the church, with her little ragged girls and boys trailing behind, all blushing to their eyes, and very proud all the same, and they were brought to the very front place of all, before the grand altar. And before the service of the mass began the dear old bishop stepped down from the altar, and put his hand upon every child and gave them all a blessing, and wished for them that the next twelve months might be prospered to them all.

And the little brats went home, and told their fathers and their mothers what had happened to them, because Honoria had asked them to her feast.

And when the sun went down they gathered around Michael's door, and were afraid to knock or go in. They were like pigeons hopping round in the garden when crumbs have been thrown out of the window, just afraid to hop upon the window-sill. But our pretty Honoria was on the watch. And when she had brought her cake in from the kitchen, and had set it in the middle of the table, and had garnished it with holly-berries, and when her brother Constant had climbed on the table and hung some mistletoe above it all, it grew so dark

that Honoria ran to the door ; and sure enough all her little flock was huddled together on the other side of the little square.

She called and she beckoned ; and one of the boldest came first, and then all the others came trailing in.

At first they were very, very shy. But after a little one of the littlest children was riding on Constant's foot. And then two of the little barbarians, as the others called the Alains, were waltzing together. And as soon as Honor saw that she caught her zithern down from the wall and played for them a brisk air ; and then all the barbarians fell to dancing, and half the others too.

Then some of the bigger ones played what you children call " Uncle John is very sick ; " for that game is more than a thousand years old, I believe.

And before half the games were done Honor's mother called them to the feast. And they ate as if they had never seen food before.

But at last not one hungry one could be found. And then, and not till then, was the great cake cut in forty pieces. For there were forty children at the feast.

And so it happened—such things always happen rightly—that a little flaxen-haired barbarian girl, who had no father and no mother and no brother and no sister, found the great scarlet bean in her piece of cake ; and she was made queen of them all.

And two of the biggest boys made an arm-chair with their arms for her ; and she was carried to her throne, all the others marching behind and clapping their hands. And just at that moment the old bishop came in, without so much as knocking, and stood right behind the throne. And he seemed just as jolly and as happy as the youngest child of all ; and not nearly as much afraid as the little girl who had been crowned the queen.

And so there were a few minutes when Honor herself forgot that her own dear brother was away, and that she could not have her father with her at the great home-feast of the year.

And Honor's dear mother forgot for the same minutes that she should never see her brother Victor again, and that if her brave boys were to do men's work in the world she could not hope to have them always at home.

And Constant forgot everything but that these children were happy.

Then came the last evening chimes, and it was time for the children to go. Each boy and each girl had a new woollen scarf, which Honor or her mother or some of their friends had knit for them ; and each carried a package home of something for a treat for those who did not come.

Only the old bishop and Honoria and her brother and her mother were left. And the candles were put out, and then the house seemed empty and lonesome.

"But it is better so," said the good woman, "than if we had parted in hate ; or as if he had not done what he thought and you thought and I thought was his duty."

"Better, indeed," said the old bishop ; "and, at the longest, it will not be very long before we shall all meet again."

"God grant it !" said the dear saint, through her tears.

"God grant it !" said a rough voice behind her, and two cold, hard hands pressed on her cheeks, and turned her head half round ; and the wondering woman, who could not see by the firelight, felt, what she could not mistake, the old-time kiss of her brother Victor, the hermit ferryman.

Honor started from her mother's feet, only to recognize her brother, Sebastian, and to see in the dusk that her father was there too.

"Here be the three kings of the East," said Sebastian, when he had kissed her forty times; "and we are all in time for the festival. Light up the candles again, and you may give us crusts to eat, and we shall think it fare for kings. For I can tell you, Lady Honor, that we are very hungry."

"What angel brought you here?" said Constant.

"We have prayed for you these three months when we said our masses for the dead," said the old bishop, who never lost his joke in any time.

"And your prayers are answered," said Victor, the hermit. "The dead have come to life. As for angels," he added, with that sweet smile of his, "I believe the angels are my brave boys here. What did I say always waited on those who do the duty that comes next their hand?"

But Honor's mother would not let any one tell stories till they had eaten and drank. Her soup was warm sooner than you could dream. By the time the soup was eaten her bread was toasted, and her savory saucers of milk, and of oil, and I don't know what, were ready; and in a minute more there were ragouts and relishes such as might come into the story in Orleans, but have no names for Yankee ears. And not till she was sure that they would eat no more would she hear of the miracle, which the children were clamoring for.

"To tell you the truth, Sister Mary," said the hermit, Victor, "I have eaten nothing but a strip of wolf's hide since the last Lord's day."

"Mother, when he came to his own house he would not so much as touch his own cheese. He gave the last

bit of it, as he gave every crumb of bread, to the others."

"Others? Who are the others?"

Then the pent-up story came. A story not unfit to close the Festival of the Three Kings. A story too long to be told here, as they told it. For the Festival of the Kings was over, and John Baptist's day—as their custom then was—had begun before the story was ended.

For our purpose only this shall be told.

Far down the Danube was the great hut, where on a stormy night the Bishop Lupus and the hermit, Victor, passing quietly from bivouac to bivouac, wakened well-nigh a hundred Christian slaves and stole away from their cruel masters.

A long push westward before dawn so parted them that the pursuit failed, and they were free.

Then the two holy men so ordered the little company, so cheered them, so fed them, and so led them that, had not winter set in so early, they would have come home in shorter time than their long march away had taken.

But winter had caught them on the east of the Rhine. The country was well-nigh desert. There were few villages left in it, and of those few very few that they could trust.

Without food, almost without clothes, almost without weapons, they had suffered horribly in the last month of their pilgrimage.

But the bishop and the hermit encouraged them all that when they came to Sens all would be well. They made a forced march to Sens, and when they came there they found blackened ruins. The shrine of St. Stephen was left, and that was all.

"I fed the women and children," said Victor, "on

broth made from the hide of an ox which the wolves were tearing to pieces, and a strip of the wolf's hide was what I took for myself. And I never told them how much wolf I put into the stew," said he, grimly.

"Brother Lupus always was thin-skinned and tender," said Agnan, aside, when their story came to this part.

"Not so tender as a lamb," said Victor, taking up his joke.

"That was the hardest of all," he added. "We started an hour before light, on the strength of that food; but before the third hour from sunrise the snow began, and in an hour more even I was lost. We should all have died but for the shelter of some hollow chestnut trees. I did not know what to pray for.

"Morning came again, and the storm was over. But I did not know where we were. Not on my own hills. I marched them west, by the sun, two hours. I sent a Catalaunian boy we had to the top of a great oak tree. The boy cheered, and said something I could not hear.

"But when he came down we heard. He had seen smoke. It was smoke not two miles away."

"Mother, it was the smoke of Uncle Victor's own cabin," said the proud Sebastian. "Father and I had made our fire out-doors, and were drying some boar's meat."

"Those two miles were soon passed, I can tell you," said the old hermit.

"And the lad here and the lad's father soon ferried us over, and fed the women and housed the men. And we knew you would want to see us on the King's Night, so we three came through. But we should be feasting with the kings themselves and with the dear Lord in heaven if these dear boys had not kept up my old ferry. Dear sister mine, let us go to bed. You owe your poor

old brother Victor's life to the steady lads who have held fast to the duty that was next their hand."

"Do you think," said Mrs. Menet, "that the average reader of that story—the traveller in a railroad, or the factory girl at Lowell—cares any more, or any less, for that story because it is told of a place three thousand miles off, and is in a time fourteen hundred years ago?"

"I think," said Haliburton, "that the average reader is embarrassed by your bishop and your train of captives and your Roman army."

"But our ears are fresh," said he, "and our eyes;" and he turned to me.

"You always have a dozen Christmas stories in your pocket. Read us one of this decade or the next; let it be of gamblers and ships and manufacturers."

I am always obedient, and I read

DICK'S CHRISTMAS.

I. — FLIGHT.

"I'll be hanged if I touch the card again!" said the Englishman. And he flung half the pack into the open fire.

The Kentuckian laughed. "I am as honest as I know how," said he; "but I have known the knave of spades by his back, and the ace of clubs, too, for the three last deals."

"Bring some clean cards, you little pirate!" cried Bastide to the pale little boy who was waiting, "and be quick about it. Here's a quarter of a dollar to grease the elevator."

The boy laughed and fled. He did not trust the elevator, but almost flew down the stairs to the office of the manager. To his disgust, although the office was open, no one was there. Dick ran right and left; he found two or three waiters, but no one who could tell where Mickliss, the head clerk, had gone, or Steedman, his second. Dick hated to lose his quarter-dollar and his reputation for promptness. He had too often been sent on such errands to be ignorant where the cards were kept. He opened the cupboard, and took out four packs. On the slate which hung on the door of the cupboard he wrote in his best writing, "Dick, for 44, fore pax." He scudded back to the stairway, fortunately found the elevator ascending, entered it, and returned to 44.

"Oh, you have been down-town for them, have you?" said the good-natured Kentuckian. He tore off the cover, and they began their game again.

They had played, perhaps, half an hour, almost in silence, and little Dick was really asleep in the embrasure of the window, when the door flew open, and Mickliss, the head clerk named above, stormed in in a passion of rage.

He caught poor Dick by the collar, and cuffed him on both ears, shook him right and left, and flung him upon the floor. He was about to kick him as he lay, when Bastide laid his strong hand on his arm, and said, "If you have any accounts to settle, settle them with me. I bade the boy bring the cards, and bring them at once. If any one stole them, I stole them."

Mickliss was far too drunk to care who or what was the man who checked him, and a storm of quarrel began, with which there is no need to sully these pages. Long before it was over little Dick, whose woes were the origin

of the Iliad of those battles, had risen from the floor, and had fled from the room, unnoticed by all the combatants.

II.—SAFETY.

Dick wasted no time in descending the stairs or in leaving the building. He caught his cap from its peg in the office as he passed out, dodged into the first cross street he came to, and fled up-town. Once in the street, he knew very well that his escape was well-nigh certain.

But he did not loiter on the snow-trodden sidewalk till he had put a couple of miles between him and his oppressor. Then in the darkness and silence he began to plan for his night's quarters. And he was only too well versed in the opportunities open in New York to young gentlemen of his freedom of life when a night's lodging is necessary. A high picket fence bounded one side of the lonely street where he was. Dick went over it like a cat, and found himself in a large long yard where stood many Pullman cars, empty. He climbed high enough on the outside of one to try its windows. All were fast, till he came to the end, where a careless porter had left a wash-room window a little open. Dick pushed it up far enough to enter, closed it again, felt his way back into the car, opened a seat in the dark, and in five minutes had forgotten the gambling saloon, and Mickliss, and Steedman, and was not even dreaming of Christmas joys. Better than any dreaming, he was enjoying the blessed unconsciousness of a tired child's sleep.

It was well-nigh eight o'clock before he waked. The motion of the car aroused him. Dick had no thought of receiving another thrashing. He watched his opportunity to drop himself unnoticed from a window upon the station platform, and found himself in the great Vander-

bilt station on Forty-second Street—a place where it is quite as difficult to go out as it is to go in.

But Dick did not distress himself. And here he was right. Before long the platform was alive with travelers eager to secure good seats, and glad in the promise of their Christmas journeys home. One immense party of old and young—men, women, children, pet dogs, maids, and men-servants, passed Dick on their way to the parlor-cars. After they had swept by, the boy saw that a little girl in the company had dropped her enormous doll. Dick seized the doll and followed.

The crowd was so great, however, and the party so large, that before he had found the right child in the parlor-car, and had explained about the recovery of the doll, he felt, by the throb under his feet, that the train was in motion. For the first time in the whole adventure Dick was disconcerted. He had meant to leave the saloon, and Mickliss, and Steedman. Yes. And he had left them. But had he meant to leave New York? Not he! New York was the best home he had had, after all, since he came there as a little boy. Little Alice saw his dismay, and so did her nurse, both grateful because he had recovered Brynhilde, the doll. The nurse said, kindly, that perhaps he could leave the train at Harlem.

Perhaps he could.

Dick tried to.

He stood on the platform, to jump off if there were any chance. The train “slowed up” a little as they passed Harlem. Ah me! The most attractive spectacle was going forward which a boy like Dick could contemplate. Actually he could see a steam fire-engine going to the fire, of which he could see the smoke. And he, free from Mickliss and from Steedman, still could assist at the fire! Was ever any fate so cruel? Every

stroke of the alarm-bell, as they whizzed by, bade him stop. But the train was relentless, and bore him on.

It is a strange thing to say, but the little fellow's heart rose in his mouth, and he choked with as much emotion as if he had left something more tangible and more affectionate behind. Somehow the dim thought of his mother came up to him, though his mother had never lived in New York. She was dead before his hard lot took him there. But she bade him go there ; she knew he was there. If, now, he went rambling over the world, would she know where to find him, and how to take care of him ? If Dick could have analyzed his vague sentiment, it would have come out in that question. But he was not the boy to stand blubbering, with a black porter looking on and wondering, and, finding that the train would not stop, he went back and made that report to Miss Alice and the friendly nurse. Then these two children, and a German boy there was, named Rodolph, fell playing together, Dick perhaps the leader of the revels. There was an affectionate gentleness in the boy, mixed with a certain independence, bred in his Ishmaelite life, which easily made him a teacher in such little sports as were possible with their space and material. He showed wonderful ability with a cup and ball, which Alice was taking to her grandfather's as one of the presents she was to give. And so steady are the runs on some of the levels of that road that they even succeeded in making card houses stand for thirty seconds, and when they fell, the joy of the fall was equal to the joy of the construction.

Nor was Dick ejected at the first watering station, as he expected, and as the intelligent reader will hope if he be a stockholder interested in railways. No ; the train was full of Christmas passengers. The parties both of

Alice's father and of Rodolph's father were large, and the conductor, as he hurried through, counting one set and counting another, allowing for babies and half-tickets and the rest, never made out that he had one extra boy of eleven years in the car. Dick was not, indeed, long enough in one spot to be easily counted by any one. It was not until the whole of the party to which he was attached arrived at Meriden, and dismounted, not till he helped Alice with Brynhilde to take her place in Uncle Nahum's elegant carriage, that an explanation took place. Alice's father, who had been quietly watching the boy's pretty ways, told him that he ought not to stand in the cold without his overcoat; and then the nurse explained, what Dick was too proud to tell, that he had no overcoat, and, indeed, had not meant to leave New York. Mr. Hulme took the boy back into the warmer station-house, and Dick told him frankly that he had run away from a gambling-house, had slept in the Pullman, and by mistake had come away from the city. Whatever the boy's faults were, he was always straightforward, and told the whole of his story.

Mr. Hulme called his brother-in-law. "Nahum, here is a stow-away, whom we have brought by mistake from New York." And in twenty more words he told the whole story.

"One boy more or less will not be felt at mother's," said Nahum, laughing. And he called to one of the drivers: "Take out another blanket, and let this boy wrap himself up in it." And Dick was tumbled into the fourth carry-all of the great cortége, and to his joy found that it was that into which Alice and the good-natured nurse had mounted already.

III.—DICK'S CHRISTMAS.

In the radiant Christmas hospitalities of Mrs. Throop there was indeed room enough for Dick, as there would have been for a dozen more of his kind had fate chosen to bring them. And in the easy interchanges between sitting-room and kitchen, and the simple relations which governed the intercourse of those in both these not unequal wings of that household, Dick did not find his unexpected visit a bore to anybody. Nobody was worried by his arrival, and nobody asked where he belonged or why he was there. He had a knack of making himself useful, as has been seen, and he had, as has been seen also, that other knack, less usual, of getting out of the way when he was not wanted.

All parties were the better for their night's sleep, and early on Christmas morning high festivities began. To his real surprise, Dick found hanging on the inside of the door of his little bedroom a large blue-yarn stocking, bigger tenfold than his own, and in it were all sorts of funny gingerbread men and horses, barley-candy statuettes, jumping-jacks, and other droll little inexpensive toys. Such minor gifts in the Throop-Hulme household were intrusted to Santa Claus at midnight. After two or three breakfasts had been served in various rooms for the enormous party of cousins, after family prayers had been gone through with after a fashion, one joyous procession was made into the "best parlor"—place reverent even with a certain superstition—and here were stacked great heaps of white paper parcels, from the tall dressing glass on three legs, which was draped in a white domino, down to the diamond ring for grandmamma, which also was enveloped in a parcel so large that grandinamma could never guess. "Three hundred and fifty-one pres-

ents, if you will believe me," said Aunt Sibyl. "There are thirty-two different people to receive, and some of them have more than twenty."

And among the presents Dick also was remembered. He had followed the gay procession a little doubtfully, but because every other member of the household did. And when "the piles were called," as the phrase went, quite early, indeed, Dick's name was called. What his last name was no one knew. Alice had promptly changed some of her plans, so that she had a backgammon-board for him. It was, of course, made to resemble two impossible books, and they were lettered, to Dick's admiration, "History of the Shah of Persia."

Mr. Hulme knew the exigencies of Christmas well enough always to buy half a dozen extra pocket-knives for boys, and one of these found its way to Dick; and Jules Verne books, and home-knit mittens, and other timely gifts made up a good "pile" for the stow-away.

The boy had never before received a present in his life. He had been "tipped" often enough, as by Bastide, when he gave him the fatal quarter-dollar. But a tip was something he earned. He had had kicks and cuffs given him, which he had not earned. But till now nobody had ever given him anything he wanted, merely for love's sake. To see thirty people together, giving to each other such beautiful things, to find that he had been remembered also in the rush of all night's preparation, all this made the tears come to poor Dick's eyes, as Mackliss's brutality or the oaths of the cross gamblers would never have summoned them. The whole fête was delightful to him, none the less. And when, of a sudden, he became quite the hero of it for a minute, because he could set up a certain parlor croquet board, of which the mechanism puzzled Uncle Nahum, Dick

received very prettily the friendly compliments of his hosts.

And now it was made clear why, after the riot-rout of the stockings before daybreak, breakfast had been so early, and no one had been allowed a second morning nap. The time was only too limited between breakfast and church-going, and at eleven o'clock the "whole boodle of them," as Uncle Nahum called the caravan, from grandmamma down to little Tom Roussillon, had to boot and spur for church. The carriages appeared for the oldsters, and the youngsters went on foot. Mrs. Hulme had found a fit overcoat for Dick, and he and Alice trudged along together.

Church-going was a matter with which Dick was not so familiar as card-playing or billiard-marking. There was a certain mission Sunday-school, to which a certain Swedish boy sometimes lured him when there was a good bounty for recruits. But attendance there did not involve attendance on the more stately services of the church itself. The boy was only the more ready to listen and to feel. As it happened, from bad luck or good luck, the minister took "Home" for his subject.

He might well have been fired in his treatment of it, as he saw the admirable family gathering in and around the Hulme and Throop and Roussillon pews. Near as he was in friendship to half that party, he may well have thought that when he spoke of a happy home as Christ's best Christmas gift to the world, they were all, in the fashion of children or of men, in sympathy with him. Alas! there was one among that happy party to whom every word was a dagger. What home was, the little boy knew well enough. He had seen it last night and that morning. But it was just what he seemed to have no place nor part in. He remembered Christmas a year

ago, though to him the year had been almost interminable. Then he was a runner in a hotel, and he well recollected how hard the pull on the boys was before people were willing to go to bed. But the boy was brave. And the words, half comprehended, of the preacher, gave him something to think of. At least he could look forward, and what he would look forward to was something like what was around him here. Some time or other he would know how to make little fellows happy, as this clever Uncle Nahum knew so well. Some time. Yes. Where? Why, New York, of course. He should be lost here in an hour. In New York he knew every turn and corner. He loved New York, and New York loved him.

And so, as they went home from church, and Alice made him listen to the new chimes which her father had given to the congregation for his Christmas present, although the bell-ringers played "Antioch" and "Christmas," it seemed to the home-sick Dick to be the same sound he heard at Harlem, which bade him not be frightened away from the city that was yet to be his home.

IV.—WHITHER NOW?

It was therefore the sermon which governed Dick's thought in an interview he had with Mr. Nahum Throop and Mr. Hulme the next morning. Hulme had given himself not only Christmas Day but St. Stephen's Day also for a holiday. In all the glee of old home life, however, he did not forget the little stow-away. He held an early council with Mr. Throop, and they sent for Dick even before breakfast. The boy came laughing, and bringing with him his precious backgammon-board.

“What have you there?” said Uncle Nahum, seeing how carefully the boy carried it.

“It is full of mice, sir,” said the boy. “They rattled about in my bedroom in the night, and I caught them.” And he led the way, with the wondering Tom and Alice, to the ever-running stream in the back passage, opened the box over the great tank, and to Alice’s amazement six mice, as soon as they recovered from a sort of stupor, jumped into the water.

“Why, it is like Cinderella,” she cried. And to the wondering gentlemen Dick explained that he heard the mice rioting in the night, and thought fit to catch them. It was dark, he said, and he had nothing but his backgammon-board. He remembered two figs which had been given him as forfeits in a game the night before, and which Alice had put in his side pockets. In the dark he had built up a little tower of checkermen and figs combined, which held the backgammon board a little open. “You see, one mouse cannot pull the fig out if you weight the trap; then another comes to help him, and when there are five or six you catch them all,” said the boy, eagerly.

Mr. Throop looked on, amazed and amused. “Were you born in Connecticut, Dick?” said he.

“Yes, sir,” said Dick, proudly. “But my mother, when she died, sir”—and the boy sobbed—“told me to go to New York, and I went there.”

The two gentlemen looked at each other, and for a minute there was silence. “I had been asking Mr. Hulme,” said Uncle Nahum, “whether he would like to leave you here, and how you would like to go into the shops, and learn, before you are a man, how we silver steel, how we melt and mould silver, and how we make the knives and forks and spoons for hungry people.”

“And I said to Uncle Nahum,” said Mr. Throop, “that you should come to him if you chose. But I said you were a New York boy, and perhaps you would like better to go back with me to-morrow. I cannot take you into the bank; we have nothing for boys to do there. But I can find some one who will teach you what your friend Milkrip never taught you, and you seem to have learned already not to lie and not to steal.”

“I do not know much, sir,” said Dick, proudly; “but so far I have learned.”

Then followed a long talk with which the reader need not be troubled. But it was pretty clear all along where the boy's affections were. Such home as he had, poor child, was in the great city whose streets he knew only too well. The two gentlemen nodded to each other, and Mr. Hulme said:

“New York it shall be, my boy; to New York you shall go.”

“You are not mad with me?” said Dick, turning eagerly to Uncle Nahum. “You have been so kind. I will do just as you say.”

“No, Dick, I am not mad at all. I say just what he says. Go to New York, and grow to be a man there, and when you are a man, Dick, look out for the little fellows who want a home.”

V.—THE SHAH.

And so Dick went to New York. Ah me! if he would make time enough to-day only to tell the story of what fell to his lot, in not so many years afterward, Gil Blas himself could not tell a more varied tale.

The smallest errand-boy in the largest wholesale grocery store in the city. It was hard for Dick to get that

sense of the "WE" without which such a concern never really prospers. It was not in one month, not in two, that Dick learned to say, "*We* telegraphed to-day for twenty cargoes of coffee," but the store was in good training, and in time Dick learned this trick as well as the bigger boys had learned it.

Everybody in theory meant to be kind to him. As often as once a month Mr. Roche, the junior partner, to whom Mr. Hulme had intrusted him, remembered to ask him how he was getting on, and if he had a good boarding-place. After a year John Roche, a son, came into the store. He took to Dick, took a fancy to him, saw to the boarding-place, had Dick in his own Sunday-school class, wrote to Mr. Brace about an evening school, and in general saw that the boy did not go to the dogs. John Roche, under Providence, was the making of Dick, and the boy grew up a ready, thrifty, kind-hearted, willing boy—a boy whom no one could spare, who helped along where he was, who did not make reply, and did not question why, but found out all the more often because he did not question.

A sad day was that for Dick when John Roche made his first voyage to the East.

"Dick," he said, "I am going to see our own coffee people. I am going to see where coffee grows and how."

"Oh, Mr. Roche, take me?"

"Dick, that was the first thing I proposed. And Mr. Balestier really thought of it. I hoped you could come. But they sent for old Portman here, and he said that they could not do without you. He said that since young Sweeney ran away he could not spare you. I said it was hard on you that you should lose the voyage; and that all ends by this: you are to have a hundred a year added to your pay from the first of last month, and at Christ-

mas another lift. But, Dick, you know that I shall miss you sadly, and you must write to me. And what shall I bring you? I would say cheroots, if you smoked."

"Bring yourself, Mr. John, and a feather from a roc's tail."

"Dick, you shall have the largest roc's egg I find."

And so John Roche sailed, and Dick was left behind. All the better for him. Now he was nobody's pet. He was an important factor in the concern. Old Portman had been made to confess his importance; that was a great thing. Mr. Balestier had learned his name; that in itself was a great thing. From this moment Dick was on his feet in the store.

And from the beginning no one in the establishment had more letters from John Roche, or fuller, than Dick had.

And when John Roche returned, when Dick met him at Quarantine to come up the bay with him in the ship, was not each of them proud of the other?

"Dick," said Mr. John, after the first, "I believe I have made your fortune."

"I hope you have made your own," said the boy.

"Dick, I was back in North Borneo, the wildest region you ever saw. A rum old Rajah, with heaven knows how many brack men in line of battle, made a swell dinner party for me and Forrester and all. It was the right thing for us all to carry presents of compliment. One man took a revolver, and one took a set of chessmen. Poor me, I did not know what to take; but Forrester said the Rajah would like your new pattern for a mouse-trap. Well, I knew it would please you to have the thing go so far, so, though it was your present to me, I took that."

"Please me!" cried Dick; "I think so! But since

you went away I have had no heart for that. You told me to take out a patent, but I have done nothing."

"Time for that now," replied John Roche. "I tell you, Dick, your fortune is made. We showed the black king how to set it with little scraps of lump-sugar, as you taught me. Well, we all went to bed early that night in the old Sachem's hacienda. And, Dick, I swear to you, the next morning that thing was full of cockroaches. Whether they have any mice in his palace I do not know. This I know—that his cockroaches are as big as mice. While they were rampaging round in your trap, and nibbling at the old Shah's sugar, some dozen of them sprang the thing, and so caught themselves and a hundred or so of their mothers and grandmothers all together. Dick, the next week this Shah, or Rajah, or Sultan, or whatever he is, sent down to the ship, oh, I do not know how much cinnamon, to say he wanted a thousand of the 'American Snapdragons.' I sent word that we had none left, but that a thousand should go out to him as soon as I returned. And now it seems that you have not even a patent, Dick."

But, as some readers may recollect if they will try, a sufficient patent was soon obtained. What South American country-seat, what palace in Madagascar, what elegant hacienda in the Philippines, is now without "The Shah's Christmas-box"?

For this was the name at last given to Dick's clever contrivance. They studied over several. One was "The Rajah's Repose;" one was "The Sultan's Solace;" one was the name the Rajah called it, "The American Snapdragon."

But Dick went fondly back to that first Christmas, of which the reader has heard. And he said that the ex-

periment was first tried by the "Shah of Persia," and that "The Shah's Christmas-box" it should be.

So "The Shah's Christmas-box" it is.

In the Mauritius and the Isle of France they spell it the "Chat." But I cannot help that.

And so this little story approaches its end. For it was the "Shah of Persia," or Alice Hulme, who gave the Shah to Dick, who, as it proved, so changed Dick's life that he became the great inventor that he is, and never a successful coffee merchant, as he seemed likely to do.

At least people say it was the Shah.

Truth is, it was all in the boy's blood. The Shah was the first success—in itself a very trivial matter. But really every new jib-key and cut-off and smoke-consumer, every variable eccentric or double-reacting combination, which has sprung from that quick creature's ready brain, all the relief which his quick wits have given to tired hands or weary feet, every prompt answer which has come from him when a fast and eager world has asked him for his help, has been born from the same native passion to act and to oblige—promptly, swiftly, and well—which earned for him his thrashing from Mickliss, which carried to Alice her doll at whatever risk, and which at the right moment made a mouse-trap from a checker-board.

A great inventor the boy became.

When he invents a way to make time, and so sits down to write that story which, as above, is to eclipse "Gil Blas," he will tell you more than I can. He will tell us how, even as a little boy, he was made welcome at Mr. Hulme's house; how pleased and satisfied he was when, at sixteen years of age, acting as third librarian's assistant at St. Martin's in the Bowery, he gave to Alice Hulme

the books her mission class needed ; how proud he was when he could walk home with her after the evening meeting of the Sunday-school teachers. And at last the fateful day came, the anxious morning, the heavenly afternoon. In the morning he closed the triumphant negotiation with the two syndicates which bought, one for the Western Hemisphere, one for the Eastern, the exclusive rights for Dick's great invention—for putting away the newspapers and finding them when they are wanted. All men know that this invention will revolutionize the world. In the afternoon he dared tell Alice that he loved her better than his life—that he could now give her the home of a princess, if only she loved him. And Alice blushed, and smiled, and tried to speak, and failed. And Dick kissed her. All this must not be told here.

It must be left to "Dick's Memoirs."

It must be the true tale, and not the fancy of an inventor.

"Alice, darling, what is that about a rose?"

"It is that in the garden of the Shah of Persia the bulbul sung to the rose all night, and that the rose was fast asleep in the morning."

"Stuff and nonsense, dearest. What is it, you know, about the name of a rose?"

"My love is like the red, red rose,
But he wears a black mustache ;
And all that is red is the end of his nose—"

thus improvised the reckless girl, singing.

"No, no, no ! What is it Juliet says ? I want you to say it."

"Want me to say that a rose by any other name

would smell as sweet? Why should I say that? Of course it would. And I do not know why Juliet is praised for knowing it. I could say that as well as Juliet."

"Alice, my life, try to be serious. My name is not —Bacon!"

"Is it Hogsflesh?" said Alice, "or is it *Pâté de fois gras*?"

"Oh, Alice, dear, you laugh and I cry! Bacon was a brute. He was my darling mother's second husband. He killed her before he broke his own neck. But she was called Bacon, and so I was called Bacon, and then I knew no better.

"But I know better now, Alice. Since I have been down to Volemtan I have learned the whole story. I never saw my father. He only lived six months after he married mother. But now I know his name. And you will never be Mrs. Bacon, even if you love me still the same. But whether I shall ever dare to tell you I do not know."

"Darling," said Alice, bravely, "I shall marry you if it turns out to be Hogsflesh, or Lamb—anything but Quack or Boar!"

And so, when they went down to grandmamma's to be married, and the dear old Christmas minister who preached about home married them, she was not Alice Bacon, after all.

And when, the next year, the great reform movement sprang into being in New York, and Tammany, and Mozart, and Irving Hall, and Cooper Institute, and all possible lesser places of meeting were on the same night crowded with eager men ready to govern the great Western Metropolis "on business principles"—when they all looked for a candidate whose own affairs were managed

with success, and who had had so little to do with party politics that he had made no enemies, it was not wonderful that without any sort of concert or prearrangement on anybody's part, the pure Democracy nominated

RICHARD WHITTINGTON,

"THE CHILD OF THE PEOPLE,"

And the Citizens nominated

RICHARD WHITTINGTON,

"THE MAN OF BUSINESS,"

And the "Sons of the Shamrock" nominated

RICHARD WHITTINGTON,

"THE IRISHMAN,"

And the Native Americans nominated

RICHARD WHITTINGTON,

"THE YANKEE INVENTOR,"

And the old Republican line nominated

RICHARD WHITTINGTON,

"THE POOR MAN'S FRIEND."

And so, for once, all parties were agreed.

And when Dick was chosen, three weeks after, there were only one hundred and twenty-three votes in opposition ; and it was then that he said, and said truly, "In

six months I shall be the most unpopular man in New York."

CHAPTER THE LAST.

"Alice," said Dick, after the last committeeman had said his last word of congratulation—long after midnight of the election day, when the two stood alone in the banquet-hall deserted—"Alice, it was what the bells said to me at Harlem, the day I found your doll, Brynhilde. They seemed to sing to me,

 " Turn, Dick, quick ;

 Turn, Dick, and stick:

 Quick, Dick, and stick, Dick ;

 Turn and stay till all is done,—

 And Dick the Mayor of the town !"

CHAPTER THE LAST.

AFTER our luxurious and elaborate Narragansett dinner, in which we sacrificed the Rhode Island turkey on his own home altar, and the mongrel goose—the curtain must fall on the varied forms of the oysters from Trustum's Bay and the clams from Oliver's garnering—we sat long at the table, and Minna Menet told stories of Christmas in Arizona, and Polly told stories of the stone and moss cottage in which they lived in Kamtschatka, and it was well-nigh nine o'clock when we left the table for the gray parlor, when she ordered coffee. The company grouped themselves to their moods—as is the habit there—some on the floor, some in extension chairs, some lying on divans, but the greater part sitting in various "sleepy hollows" of twenty different forms. I was standing by Minna Menet, when one of the boys came in and said, would they not like to see the Palatine—"it is very funny to-night."

"He means the Fall River steamer," said Ingham. "It is well worth seeing on a fine night." And he took Mrs. Menet out with him.

A good many of those who were comparatively strangers followed to the fine veranda.

It is a fine sight of a clear night, under the blaze of the winter stars sparkling from the black heaven. You see no form of a ship, but the long double row of the state-room lights—perhaps a flare of lighted steam or smoke when they open the furnace—and the whole sweeps along noiselessly, just where Whittier's fire-ship

of the Palatine ought to appear, midway between Block Island and our shore.

It is for this reason that our young people are in the habit of calling the Fall River boat the Palatine.

The veranda party came in laughing and shivering, and Mrs. Menet said, recurring to the talk of the afternoon, "There is your legend with the local color of to-day.

"Now, let us see what we can do with these lazy people who have not even gone to the window.

"Those are the people to read historical novels—the people who are too lazy to read the real histories."

So she began, assisted by Mrs. Fréchette, in a rattling account of what they had seen, keeping within the bounds of truth, but not saying one word which might not have been said of the real phantom, if a phantom can be real.

"But really," said Theodora Decker, modestly and blushing—"but you know I am only a Pacific Ocean girl—a sort of pale-faced Kanaka. I must 'confess ignorance,' as dear Mr. Hale says. I do not know what you mean by the Palatine. I thought the Palatine was a hill in Rome."

"Delightful!" cried Colonel Ingham; "then we can read you Whittier's poem. It is the most charming and best authenticated of all our traditions."

There are not twenty books in the gray parlor, but one of these is "The Tent on the Beach," and Ingham took this and stood with his back to the fire to read. As he found the place, he said: "Remember, Mrs. Decker, that the Indian name for Block Island yonder was Manisees. And it is in this very Sound yonder, between here and there, that the Palatine appears."

Then he read the ballad of

THE PALATINE.*

Leagues north, as fly the gull and auk,
Point Judith watches with eye of hawk ;
Leagues south, thy beacon flames, Montauk !

Lonely and wind-shorn, wood-forsaken,
With never a tree for spring to waken,
For tryst of lovers or farewells taken,

Circled by waters that never freeze,
Beaten by billow and swept by breeze,
Lieth the island of Manisees,

Set at the mouth of the Sound to hold
The coast lights up on its turrets old,
Yellow with moss and sea-fog mould.

Dreary the land when gust and sleet
At its doors and windows howl and beat,
And winter laughs at its fires of peat !

But in summer-time, when pool and pond,
Held in the laps of valleys fond,
Are blue as the glimpses of sea beyond ;

When the hills are sweet with the brier-rose,
And, hid in the warm, soft dells, uncloze
Flowers the mainland rarely knows,

When boats to their morning fishing go,
And, held to the wind and slanting low,
Whitening and darkening the small sails show—

Then is that lonely island fair ;
And the pale health-seeker findeth there
The wine of life in its pleasant air.

No greener valleys the sun invite,
On smoother beaches no sea-birds light,
No blue waves shatter to foam more white !

* The reader owes the pleasure before him to the courtesy of Mr. Whittier and the publishers of his poems, Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

There, circling ever their narrow range,
Quaint tradition and legend strange
Live on unchallenged and know no change.

Old wives spinning their webs of tow,
Or rocking weirdly to and fro,
In and out of the peat's dull glow,

And old men mending their nets of twine,
Talk together of dream and sign,
Talk of the lost ship Palatine—

The ship that a hundred years before,
Freighted deep with its goodly store,
In the gales of the equinox went ashore.

The eager islanders, one by one,
Counted the shots of her signal-gun,
And heard the crash when she drove right on !

Into the teeth of death she sped
(May God forgive the hands that fed
The false lights over the rocky Head !) ;

Oh, men and brothers ! What sights were there !
White upturned faces, hands stretched in prayer !
Where waves had pity, could ye not spare ?

Down swooped the wreckers, like birds of prey,
Tearing the heart of the ship away,
And the dead had never a word to say.

And then, with ghastly shimmer and shine,
Over the rocks and the seething brine
They burned the wreck of the Palatine.

In their cruel hearts, as they homeward sped,
“ The sea and the rocks are dumb,” they said ;
“ There 'll be no reckoning with the dead.”

But the year went round, and when once more
Along the foam-white curves of shore
We heard the line-storm rave and roar,

Behold ! again, with shimmer and shine,
Over the rocks and the seething brine,
The flaming wreck of the Palatine !

So, haply in fitter words than these,
Mending their nets on their patient knees,
They tell the legend of Manisees.

Nor looks nor tones a doubt betray ;
" It is known to us all," they quietly say ;
" We too have seen it in our day."

Is there, then, no death for a word once spoken ?
Was never a deed but left its token
Written on tables never broken ?

Do the elements subtle reflections give ?
Do pictures of all the ages live
On nature's infinite negative,

What, half in sport, in malice half,
She shows at times, with shudder or laugh,
Phantom and shadow in photograph ?

For still on many a moonless night,
From Kingston Head and Montauk Light,
The spectre kindles and burns in sight.

Now low and dim, now clear and higher,
Leaps up that terrible ghost of fire,
Then, slowly sinking, the flames expire.

And the wise Sound skippers, though skies be fine,
Reef their sails when they see the sign
Of the blazing wreck of the Palatine.

There was a hush of a full minute after this weird, ghastly ending. Ingham threw himself into his favorite chair, which all men leave for him.

" Have you ever seen it ?" asked Mrs. Decker, a little frightened, because she must say something.

" I ?" said Ingham, startled—" have I seen it ? I—I had rather not say. You know, dear Mrs. Decker, we are not—we are not here—but—but four or five months in the year."

His voice broke queerly, as is not his way. He paused again, took another book from the little Norton made out of laurel roots. It was "Livermore's Block Island."

"Plenty of people have seen it. Here is one of your scientific men's account of it. This is the letter of Dr. Willey, a thoroughly intelligent man, who had seen it once and again :

" " This curious irradiative rises from the ocean near the northern point of the island. Its appearance is nothing different from a blaze of fire. Whether it actually touches the water; or merely hovers over it, is uncertain, for I have been informed that no person has been near enough to decide accurately. It beams with various magnitudes, and appears to bear no analogy to the *ignis fatuus* than it does to the aurora borealis. Sometimes it is small, resembling the light through a distant window ; at others expanding to the height of a ship with all her canvas spread. When large it displays a pyramidical form, or three constant streams. In the latter case the streams are somewhat blended together at the bottom, but separate and distinct at the top, while the middle one rises higher than the other two. It may have the same appearance when small, but, owing to distance and surrounding vapors, cannot be clearly perceived.

" " The light often seems to be in a constant state of insulation, descending by degrees until it becomes invisible, or resembles a lurid point ; then shining anew, sometimes with a sudden blaze, at others by a gradual increasement to its former size. Often the instability regards the lustre only, becoming less and less bright until it disappears, or nothing but a pale outline can be discerned of its full size, then returning to its former splendor in the manner before related. The duration of its greatest and least state of illumination is not com-

monly more than two or three minutes. This inconstancy, however, does not appear in every instance.

“ ‘After the radiance seems to be wholly extinct, it does not always return in the same place, but is not unfrequently seen shining at some considerable distance from where it disappeared. In this transfer of locality it seems to have no certain line of direction. When most expanded, this blaze is generally waving, like the flame of a torch ; at one time it appears stationary, at another progressive.’ ”

“ Do you mean, Colonel Ingham, that this thing has been seen in this generation, in our time—in scientific times ? ” said Mrs. Menet, eagerly, almost passionately.

Before Ingham could answer the parlor door swung open, and Wanton Maxcy appeared—one of the small farmers who lived below us. There is not a door-bell within six miles, as has been said. Whoever wants to enter enters. Maxcy wanted to enter, and so came in.

“ Colonel Ingham,” he said, eagerly, panting for breath, “ come to the door. There’s a ship on fire beyond the Pint. Et’s not the Bristol. She’s passed. Looks like a three-master, high out of the water, old-fashioned build, three decks, mebbe.”

He was running through the hall with Ingham as he spoke. And as they stood together in the open air, I heard him, though he dropped his voice, say, “ Is it the Palatine, colonel ? ”

Sure enough, this tower of light shot up to the sky. I could make out no form of spars—of course not of sails. The women thought they saw masts. Ingham did not, for one instant, lose his presence of mind.

He was at the stable telephone in a moment.

"Both beach-wagons this minute. I will send you Cephas and Hiram to help you."

In fact, Pauline had already sent Cephas and Hiram, and we could see them running down the hill.

"Order the barge, Fred. We must all go to the beach," said his wife. And Fred bade them send up the barge, beside the two wagons.

["Barge" is modern Yankee for a large omnibus, with seats running in the same direction as the roadway, and a canvas cover.]

In two minutes the ladies were standing with their fur cloaks on. Ingham and the servants brought out buckets and baskets, with ready bales of blanket for any wet wretch who might be pulled from the sea, with flasks of brandy, and all other supplies, long since pre-vised and pro-vided.

"In the heat of conflict keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw."

The two beach wagons came up the avenue, and eight men and boys entered.

The "barge" was not far behind. I ran down to my house and stopped at Hoxie's, that two wagons might be got ready for me and mine. I own no horses, and always hire his.

Alas! all his horses were at Kingston. The young people had gone there to a dance.

"But, Mr. Hale, I will run to my uncle's. I will be there in no time. You can have both his teams." So said the eager Cynthia Hoxie, forgetting the sick-head-ache which had kept her at home. And she was away across the fields in the darkness.

Then it seemed as if everything hindered me. My storm boots were both right-hand boots. I could not

find the ash oars I needed. I meant to take two heavy ulsters, but they had disappeared. Worst of all, Cynthia came back breathless, to say that her uncle had already gone to the beach with every horse he had.

I must follow on foot, or be too late.

Was I slow? I tried to run, and it seemed as if my feet were glued to the ground. At the schoolhouse I even left my packages, lest I should never get there. I toiled on, panting, down the sandy drift-way. The light of the burning ship seemed to brighten the sky, but I could not see her. I dragged myself on. At the hotel all was dark as night. No one was in the fishermen's houses. I turned from their shelter upon the beach, and I could see I was just too late.

They had shoved the Uncle Fritz—Ingham's great Block Island schooner—down the ready rollers of her ways.

I could just see her as she faded into the rising fog.

I could see Ingham, dear, kind fellow, as he waved his hand.

I could hear nothing but the waves.

I looked for the Palatine. And the light was wholly gone.

I waited all night upon the beach. I saw morning dawn. But the Uncle Fritz had disappeared. And no one of them returned.

Were they, perhaps all of them, phantoms of the imagination?

"The best in this kind are but shadows."

What is real being?

All Rhode Islanders are Idealists, and have been from Roger Williams down. Roger Williams? Was not Canonchet an Idealist?

Roger Williams, Coddington, Hutchinson, Ellery, Channing, Malbone, Alston, Wayland, Burgess, Hazard, Wager, Greene, Weeden, Perry, Jemima Wilkinson, George Fox's friends, Foster, Albert Greene, Mrs. Rathbun,—every one of them has lived and died for the Idea.

Why did Bishop Berkeley come and make his home here, and die here, at Newport yonder ?

Is it perhaps true, as he said, that that which we call matter is only an impression produced on the mind ?

Ingham, Haliburton, and all the rest of them ; the Palatine and the beach here, the drift-way and my home. What do I mean when I say that they are Real ?

THE END.

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